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LIVERPOOL FC

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LIVERPOOL FOOTBALL CLUB
EST 1892

MID-SEASON'S GREETINGS

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Official Liverpool FC Monthly Magazine

Contents



Kenny Dalglish and family at Christmas, 1987

Reach Sport
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YOU'LL NEVER WALK ALONE

Liverpool's win over Brighton & Hove Albion at the end of November featured a six-minute tribute to the 96 Reds lost at Hillsborough and a special mosaic was displayed on the Kop ahead of the Merseyside derby. An official club statement praised the Hillsborough families, survivors and campaigners for what they have achieved following the recent verdict at Preston Crown Court. Our thoughts remain with them and those 96 Liverpool supporters who went to watch their team and never came home.




new balance
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LIVERPOOL





LOVE SHAQ

Xherdan Shaqiri celebrates with Adam Lallana after putting the Reds two goals to the good inside 17 minutes in the Merseyside derby. The 5-2 win saw Liverpool set a new club record of 32 top-flight matches unbeaten. It was also Jürgen Klopp's 100th Premier League win as manager.



WORK SCORE SMILE

That's the **Bobby Firmino** mantra, the selfless superstar who constantly demands more from his own game

Words: William Hughes

He has been called the missing piece in the Liverpool FC puzzle, the conductor that makes the various parts of the Reds' orchestra sync to produce polished performances.

But four-and-a-half years into his Liverpool residency Roberto Firmino believes his best work is yet to come, which is truly music to the ears of Kopites all over the land.

The 28-year-old has developed season-by-season since he was recruited from Hoffenheim in the summer of 2015 and says that his progress can be measured in every attribute. "I think I have improved a lot in every way. Physically, tactically, mentally, I learned a bit of every aspect. But I do not want to stop here – I want to keep improving.

"I think our team has been growing over the years, mentally especially. And when you are really well mentally on the pitch it is very important with every decision you have to take. I hope we can keep growing mentally as there is always room for further improvement."

One of the ways that strong mentality has manifested itself in recent weeks is the number of late goals the team has produced.

The win at Aston Villa was one example. Trailing with three minutes on the clock, the Reds not only contented themselves with a late equaliser but pushed for an added-time winner.

The win at Crystal Palace was another. Pegged back with eight minutes left, up popped Firmino to restore Liverpool's lead and the three precious points.

It had been a similar situation at Manchester United when the team also grabbed a late equaliser and pushed hard to find a winning goal at Old Trafford.

"I think this team now has real persistence," continues Bobby. "To fight and win the matches always, and to never give up. Regardless of the scoreline, we're always chasing the win and never giving up. That makes our team grow with each match and we can do this well now. It has been working."

The no9 has also become known for his selflessness, always playing in others rather than going for goal himself if he deems them to be in a better position.

This is reflected in his statistics so far this season. Following the Anfield derby win over Everton he had four goals and 11 assists to his name in all competitions. That latter category includes a hat-trick of assists in the 4-3 Champions League win over Salzburg at Anfield in October.

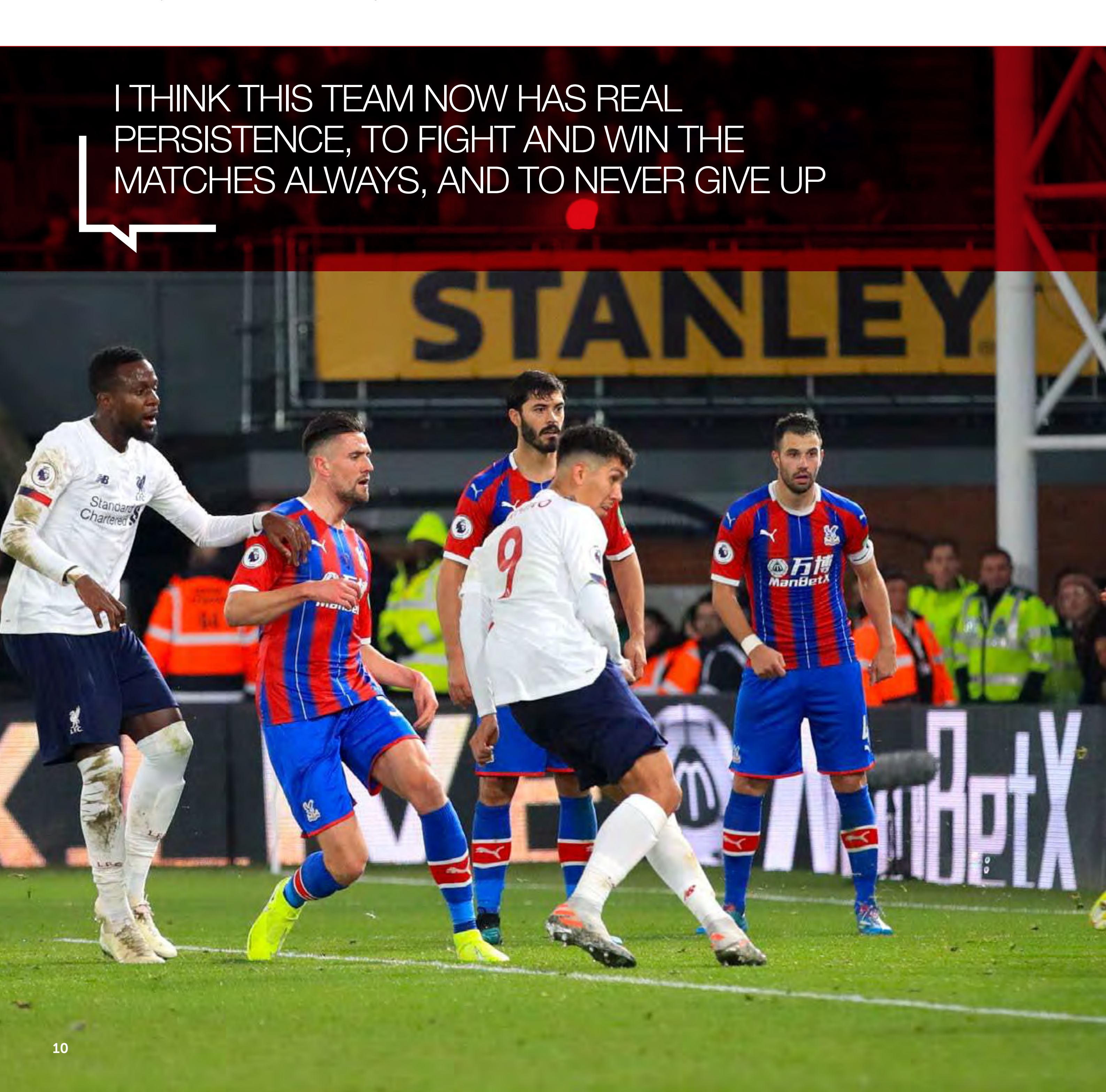
"That is just me, my personality, to try to be a good and humble guy," he explains. "To try to help my team in the best way with assists and goals. I like that. I like to win all the time, and for that I will always be like this.

"I am a guy who respects my position on the pitch. Where the team needs me, I will play. Usually that's as a number nine, but sometimes I play as a number 10 and I always try to give my best.

"As I mentioned before, I always want to help my team as best as I can and I am always chasing the win – that is what matters the most."

That said, Firmino admits that he would like to weigh in with more goals and has been inwardly frustrated at his personal haul this season to date, even if it would be one higher had he not allowed his armpit to stray offside at Villa Park last month!

I THINK THIS TEAM NOW HAS REAL PERSISTENCE, TO FIGHT AND WIN THE MATCHES ALWAYS, AND TO NEVER GIVE UP



"The football world today is measured by goals and trophies, not just today – it's always been that way. So obviously in my position lots of goals are expected.

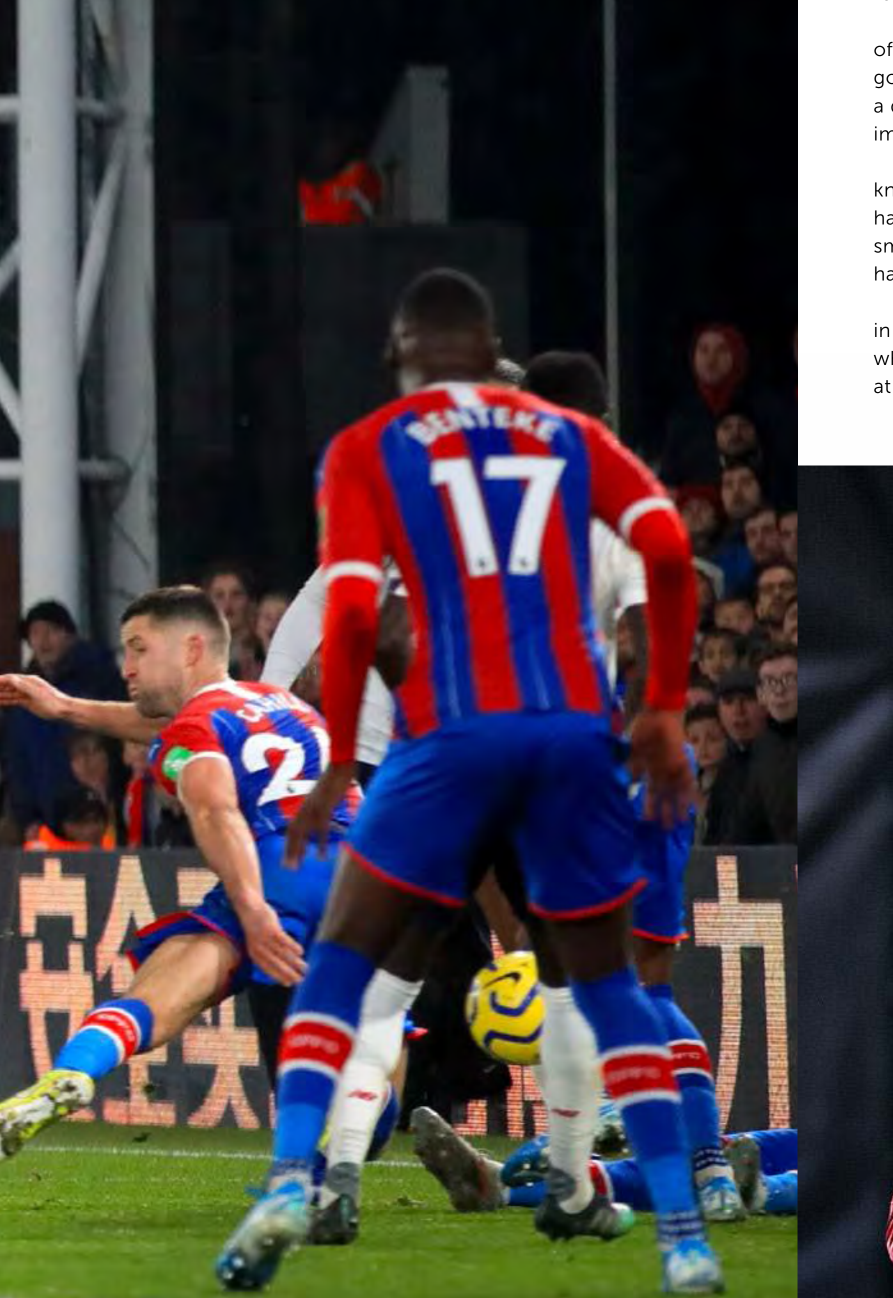
"I always want to be scoring a lot of goals and contributing to the team with assists and goals most of all. I feel really annoyed when I don't score. I demand a lot of myself and I want the best for my team, my club and I'm happy when we win. But when I don't score, inside I'm annoyed."

Liverpudlians have been lapping up his Samba style with the 'no-look' flicks and tricks and his eye for a telling pass. Quizzed about his repertoire of silky skills, he says: "We learn this over time. We pick things up here and there in training of course and by watching videos.

"It's a case of wanting it, wanting to be constantly evolving and growing in every way. This has helped me on the pitch. I've been doing well, but I hope it doesn't stop here and that I'll always be improving."

His calm character also helps. Sadio Mane, one of the main beneficiaries of Firmino's assists, recently described his team-





mate as "a great guy and the quietest man I have ever met in football!"

Of his laid-back personality, Bobby says: "I am really calm off the pitch. Of course on the pitch we are all different, in a good way, trying to give our best for winning. Off the pitch I am a quiet guy. Always smiling, like you can see, and that is very important.

"I've been told a few of the guys try to smile like me. I don't know, but mine is obviously the best out of all of them! I'm happy, not that they copied me, but that they also wanted a smile like this. I hope it continues and people are increasingly happy!"

Firmino's evolution into the attacking fulcrum he is today is in no small part down to his relationship with Jürgen Klopp, who took charge of Liverpool five months after Firmino's arrival at the club. The Brazilian refuses


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to play down the influence the manager has had on helping his star to rise along with the team's.

"I never tire of praising Klopp. He has so many good characteristics on and off the pitch. He really helps us on a daily basis and we learn so much from him in every way.

"He is able to have the team with him. We have been doing things well and learning a lot from him, and we have been showing on the pitch that we can grow more and more each day and do our best. He is a fantastic coach for us."

The 5-2 defeat of Everton on 4 December gave the Reds an eight-point advantage over Leicester City, an 11-point gap on Manchester City and 12-points on Chelsea after 15 fixtures. They have won against all three sides in Premier League action this season and Firmino admits last month's win over City at Anfield was a major boost to the team's confidence.

"It was an important match, like all the others. It ended up being more special because it was two teams fighting for the top of the table. It was a match where we knew we had to be careful, playing against a big team that we know really well and they know us well too. We had to be careful and focused on the game to perform well and try to win and we were able to do that.

"It gives us confidence because we know City is a great rival. They have won Premier League titles back-to-back and they are a great club with great players and a great manager. We knew that we would have to be at our best on the pitch and we played a great game.

"We were happy to get the win but we also know it is still very early days as far as the league is concerned."



WHEN WE'RE ON THE PITCH IT'S GREAT TO HEAR THE FANS CHANTING OUR NAMES, SINGING OUR SONGS, IT MOTIVATES US EVEN FURTHER TO DO OUR BEST ON THE PITCH AND HELP THE TEAM

There was a great atmosphere inside the ground that day and Firmino believes "the power of Anfield" that Klopp often speaks about, can be another driver towards success as the season progresses.

"Our fans can be that extra player as they support us during the whole match. On the pitch, we try to do our best but they always support us during the whole 90-plus minutes and so they really are our 12th player."

Of course not a match at Anfield goes by nowadays without numerous renditions of 'the Bobby song'. He smiles again at the mention of it.

"The song's really cool, part Latin from La Bombonera in its rhythm [the atmospheric home of Argentinian club, Boca Juniors]. It's really motivating. When we're on the pitch it's great to hear the fans chanting our names, singing our songs, it motivates us even further to do our best on the pitch and help the team.

"Si Señor…it really does stick in your head. I'm not going to sing it though!"

This summer Bobby and Alisson Becker helped the national team lift the Copa America. With a healthy number of the Selecao playing in the Premier League, interest in English football is strong back home.

Liverpool's 2-1 win at Crystal Palace last month saw Firmino





become the tenth Brazilian to make 150 appearances in the Premier League. His impact has seen him described by many respected analysts as the best ever Brazilian to play in the top-tier of English football.

When this is suggested to him, he responds by paying tribute to two compatriots who helped him settle on these shores. "Of course I like to receive praise, it's an honour, but I want to be constantly growing so the praise stays around forever.

"When I arrived here [Philippe] Coutinho helped me a lot. We know he's a great player with a great career in world football. He was one of the players that helped me, together with Lucas Leiva. The two of them inspired me because they supported me so much so I owe a lot to them."

The past decade has seen Firmino come a long way from the teenager making his way with Brazilian Serie B outfit Figueirense but he says his formative experiences have also been key to shaping him become the man and player he is today.

"My childhood was well-spent. I played out a lot, playing a lot of football. I did everything, flying kites, playing with spinning tops, playing with friends. My dad was a street vendor and he sold coconut water, soft drinks and water at matches.

"The stadium was about a two or three minute walk away from where we lived. I used to help him sometimes and I thought it was great. I've got good memories of my childhood."

South American clubs have a great tradition in the Club World Cup with three of them – Flamengo, Independiente and Sao Paulo – thwarting Liverpool's attempts to get their hands on the trophy.

I ALWAYS WANT TO BE THERE COMPETING AND CONTRIBUTING WHEREVER WE CAN TO WIN TROPHIES, I JUST WANT TO KEEP WINNING WITH THIS CLUB



Flamengo are most likely to stand in their way again with the two sides favourites to meet in the tournament final on Saturday 21 December.

After a year that has seen him become a European gold medalist with his club and a Copa America champion with his country, Bobby admits it would be the perfect way to round off his 2019 by becoming a world champion with Liverpool.

He has had depictions of both those other two trophies etched onto his back and would love another appointment with his tattoo artist to complete the hat-trick soon!

"I knew this question was coming! At the time they were the first two trophies of my career and I was so happy to have won them. The Champions League and the Copa America with the Brazilian national team are two very important tournaments together with the World Cup and I had to mark these achievements, not just in my memory but also on my skin.

"We know that Flamengo are in great form, led by their manager, Jorge Jesus. They're a mature team with top-level players. Flamengo would be special, of course, as they're a Brazilian team, but we'll do our best. It would be a cup final and of course we want to win the trophy but we have to win the semi-final first.

"I always want to be there competing and contributing wherever we can to win trophies."

And, as he looks ahead to a bright future calling the tune with a Liverpool team that seems to be getting better all the time, Firmino says: "I always want more. I have big goals and I want to keep winning titles with this club. And that is it."





The Premier League's Brazilian 150 club

247 Lucas Leiva
212* Willian
205* Fernandinho
195* Heurelho Gomes
173* David Luiz
170 Gilberto Silva
159 Ramires
152 Philippe Coutinho
152* Roberto Firmino
151 Emerson Thome

**Still playing in the Premier League.*
Appearances correct to 04.12.19

ANNIE ROAD
WHAT'S THE SCORE?





Last month saw Liverpool FC reveal exciting new plans for an expansion of the Anfield Road stand, with local people and fans at the heart of its consultation process

Main Stand first, Kirkby second, Anfield Road third. That, in the most rudimentary of terms, has been the priority order of Liverpool FC's extant big development-projects.

The expanded Main Stand was at the heart of a regeneration project led by the council, the club and Your Housing Group and, as a work-in-progress, held up by the government as a textbook example of "community-led, place-focused regeneration."

The new first-team-and-Academy training complex, as you can

read elsewhere in this issue, is on course for completion in Kirkby by next summer with the club also handing over ownership and operation of newly-redeveloped community pitches at the north end of the site.

Now LFC has opened a first-stage public consultation exercise to share early ideas for the proposed expansion of the Anfield Road Stand and listen to views from the local community, local businesses, supporters and key stakeholders.

The vision for the project is to create a bigger Anfield stadium. Should the expansion go ahead, it would increase the overall capacity to over 61,000.

The club recently hosted a number of drop-in events to share the early-stage plans, with public events beginning on Friday 29 November in the Kop Bar at Anfield. The plans are in early design development and feedback received will enable Liverpool FC to make informed decisions in line with its commitment to finding the best possible solution for the expansion.

The new proposals are consistent with the previously consented scheme, but Andy Hughes, the club's chief operating officer, explains: "For any expansion to the Anfield Road Stand to go ahead, we need certainty on three key areas.

"Firstly, that we are able to reach agreement with local residents, businesses and community groups that they will allow the expansion plan to take place, which will mean closing a short section of Anfield Road between 96 Avenue and Skerries Road.

"Secondly, that we have the right sustainable financial and economic model in place to deliver a long-term sustainable Anfield. And lastly, that we are able to successfully navigate the complex planning landscape. We need to be satisfied on all three points for work to proceed.

"We are working towards creating an expanded Anfield Road Stand which will see around 7,000 additional seats. The majority of these seats will be for general admission use and we expect some seats will be allocated for a sports bar/lounge-type hospitality in order to ensure the economic viability of the expansion.

"Further profiling is needed and we expect to provide more detail at the second-stage consultation early next year.

"These first-stage consultation sessions we are holding are crucial as they will be used to inform the design proposals we are developing, which in turn will help us to make a decision on whether to proceed with the expansion as a whole."

The plans for the proposed expansion include exploring the opportunity for permanent permission to hold concerts and other major events at Anfield, including other sporting events such as Gaelic games and American football outside of the matchday calendar.

The first-stage public consultation has invited feedback until Friday 13 December, with a project information pod in place on Anfield Road car-park before the home Premier League fixtures Brighton & Hove Albion and Everton. A second stage will follow in early 2020 when the detailed plans will be available.


Anfield Road as it is now



How Anfield Road could look

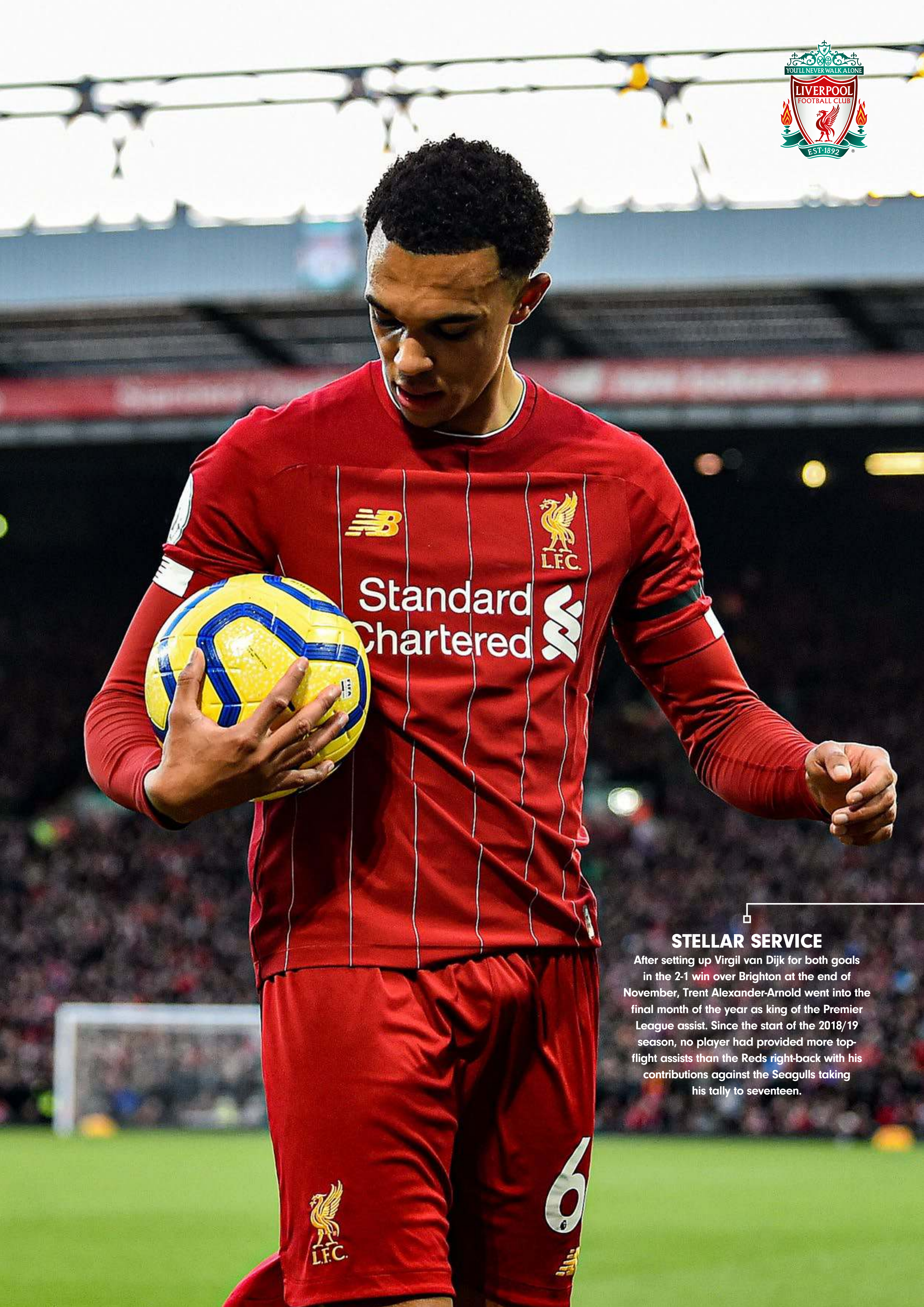
The development masterplan



THE WORLD'S BEST GOALIE

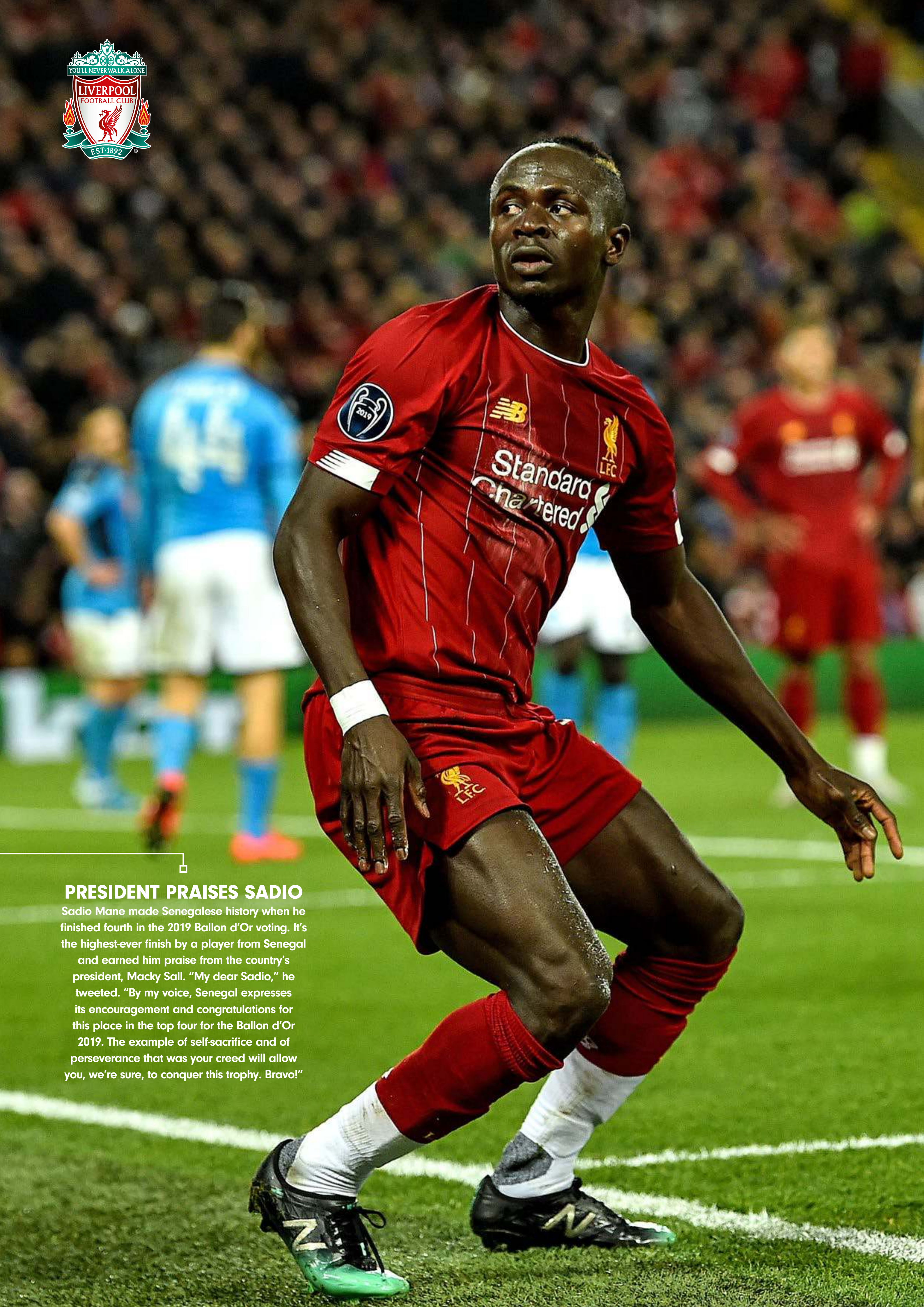
Alisson became the inaugural recipient of the Yachine Trophy – named after legendary Soviet goalkeeper Lev Yashin – at France Football's Ballon d'Or awards night in Paris. The newly-created accolade goes to the best goalkeeper in the world with Liverpool's no1 grateful to receive the prestigious honour. "I don't feel lucky, I feel blessed and grateful," said the Brazilian after thanking his family and God. "I also want to say thank you to my team-mates, to all the Liverpool staff. Thank you very much."


L.F.C.
"'Tis the season...
to believe"
Jürgen Klopp
100s of Exclusive LFC Gifts
In-store & online
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WE ARE LIVERPOOL.
THIS MEANS MORE.



STELLAR SERVICE

After setting up Virgil van Dijk for both goals in the 2-1 win over Brighton at the end of November, Trent Alexander-Arnold went into the final month of the year as king of the Premier League assist. Since the start of the 2018/19 season, no player had provided more top-flight assists than the Reds right-back with his contributions against the Seagulls taking his tally to seventeen.



PRESIDENT PRAISES SADIO

Sadio Mane made Senegalese history when he finished fourth in the 2019 Ballon d'Or voting. It's the highest-ever finish by a player from Senegal and earned him praise from the country's president, Macky Sall. "My dear Sadio," he tweeted. "By my voice, Senegal expresses its encouragement and congratulations for this place in the top four for the Ballon d'Or 2019. The example of self-sacrifice and of perseverance that was your creed will allow you, we're sure, to conquer this trophy. Bravo!"

2019 QUIZ

1. WHO SCORED LIVERPOOL'S FIRST GOAL OF 2019?

2. WHICH CLUB TWO CLUBS DID POLISH GOALKEEPER KAMIL GRABARA JOIN ON LOAN IN 2019?

3. NAME THE THREE LIVERPOOL PLAYERS WHO MADE THEIR DEBUT FOR THE CLUB IN THE FA CUP TIE AT WOLVERHAMPTON WANDERERS?

4. WHICH CLUB IN JANUARY RECORDED A HIGHEST-EVER STADIUM ATTENDANCE WHEN THE REDS VISITED?

5. WHO, IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE 2018/19 SEASON, SUFFERED HIS FIRST DEFEAT IN FIVE VISITS TO ANFIELD AS AN OPPOSITION MANAGER?

6. WHO PARTNERED JOEL MATIP AT CENTRE-BACK IN THE ABSENCE OF VIRGIL VAN DIJK IN THE CHAMPIONS LEAGUE ENCOUNTER WITH BAYERN MUNICH AT ANFIELD?

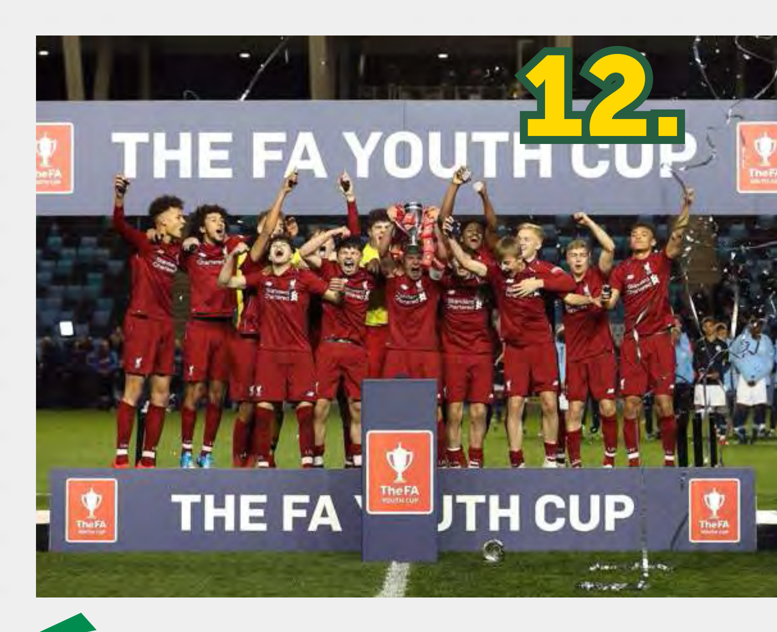
7. AGAINST WHICH TEAM IN FEBRUARY DID LIVERPOOL CREATE CLUB HISTORY BY SCORING FIVE GOALS AGAINST THEM FOR A THIRD SUCCESSIVE HOME LEAGUE GAME?

8. WHO, IN APRIL, SCORED HIS FIRST LIVERPOOL GOAL IN HIS 28TH CLUB APPEARANCE, VERSUS SOUTHAMPTON?

9. WHO CAME OFF THE BENCH AT PORTO TO SCORE LIVERPOOL'S 50TH EUROPEAN GOAL BY A SUBSTITUTE?

10. WHO WAS THE FIRST PLAYER TO SCORE TWICE IN A SINGLE GAME AGAINST THE REDS IN 2019?

11. HOW MANY SUBSTITUTES DID LIVERPOOL NAME ON THE BENCH FOR THE CHAMPIONS LEAGUE FINAL?



12. WHO DID LIVERPOOL DEFEAT ON PENALTIES TO WIN THE FA YOUTH CUP FINAL?

13. NAME THE FOUR REDS PLAYERS WHO WERE INCLUDED IN THE PFA TEAM OF THE YEAR...

14. WHICH TEAM CONCEDED A GOAL TO LIVERPOOL AFTER ONLY 15 SECONDS AT ANFIELD IN APRIL?

15. WHO REPLACED ANDY ROBERTSON AT HALF-TIME IN THE REDS' 4-0 WIN OVER BARCELONA?

Compiled by Ged Rea and Dave Ball

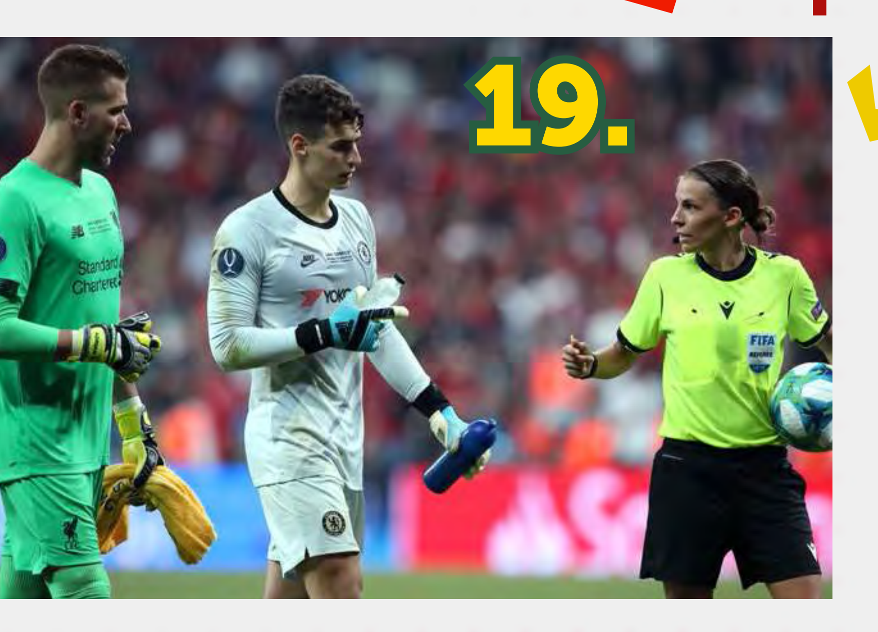


16. WHICH TWO PLAYERS WERE NAMED AS LIVERPOOL SUBSTITUTES IN THE CHAMPIONS LEAGUE FINAL DESPITE NOT HAVING MADE A FIRST-TEAM APPEARANCE?

17. FOR WHICH CLUB DID RAFA CAMACHO LEAVE ANFIELD IN THE SUMMER OF 2019?

18. WHOSE PENALTY DID ADRIAN SAVE TO WIN LIVERPOOL THE UEFA SUPER CUP IN AUGUST?

19. AND WHAT WAS THE NATIONALITY OF THE FIRST FEMALE TO REFEREE A MAJOR MEN'S EUROPEAN FINAL, DOING SO IN ISTANBUL FOR LIVERPOOL V CHELSEA IN AUGUST?





20. WHO, IN THE GAME WITH NORWICH ON A FRIDAY EVENING IN AUGUST, BECAME THE 13TH PLAYER IN LIVERPOOL HISTORY TO SCORE ON ALL SEVEN DAYS OF THE WEEK?

21. WHO WAS THE FIRST FORMER LIVERPOOL PLAYER TO SCORE A LEAGUE GOAL AGAINST THE REDS IN THIS CALENDAR YEAR?

22. WHO IN OCTOBER BECAME THE TENTH PLAYER TO SCORE 50 PREMIER LEAGUE GOALS FOR LIVERPOOL?

23. NAME THE PLAYER WHO IN 2019 SCORED HIS FIRST LEAGUE CUP GOAL FOR NINE YEARS?

28.

24. WHICH PLAYER SCORED FOR THE REDS IN THE COMMUNITY SHIELD AGAINST MAN CITY AT WEMBLEY?

25. NEARLY SIX YEARS AFTER MAKING THE LAST OF HIS TWO LIVERPOOL APPEARANCES, WHO PLAYED IN A WINNING SIDE AGAINST THE REDS IN JANUARY?

26. WHICH PLAYER SCORED IN BOTH OF LIVERPOOL'S WINNING PENALTY SHOOTOUTS AGAINST CHELSEA AND ARSENAL?

27. WHICH THREE SIDES SCORED THREE TIMES AT ANFIELD IN 2019 YET STILL ENDED UP LOSING?

28. FROM WHO'S CROSS DID GINI WIJNALDUM HEAD IN LIVERPOOL'S THIRD GOAL IN THE 4-0 WIN AGAINST BARCELONA?

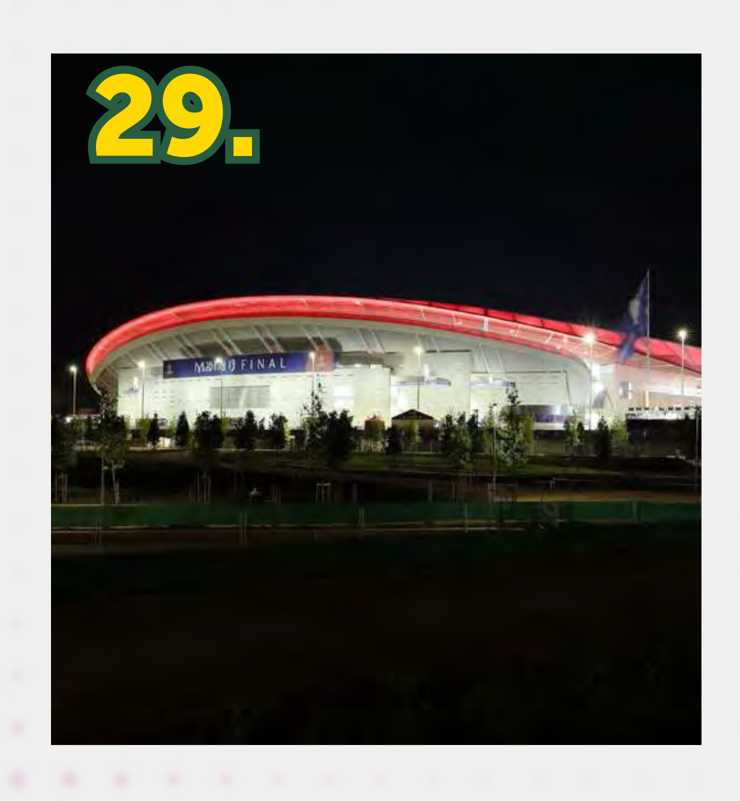
29. WHAT WAS THE NAME OF THE STADIUM THE CHAMPIONS LEAGUE FINAL WAS HELD IN?

30. WHICH LIVERPOOL PLAYER SCORED THREE GOALS IN TWO GAMES AGAINST GENK IN THE CHAMPIONS LEAGUE?

31. WHICH PLAYER APPEARED IN SUCCESSIVE CHAMPIONS LEAGUE GAMES AGAINST THE REDS IN 2019 FOR DIFFERENT TEAMS?

32. WHICH TWO PLAYERS' FINAL GAMES FOR THE CLUB CAME IN THE FA CUP AGAINST WOLVES?

33. WHO SCORED HIS FIRST GOAL OF 2019 FROM A FREE-KICK IN A 2-1 WIN AWAY TO CHELSEA?



34. WHO IN OCTOBER, SCORED HIS FIRST GOAL FOR THE REDS SINCE MAY 2017?

35. WHO WAS THE FIRST PLAYER TO SCORE AGAINST LIVERPOOL IN TWO DIFFERENT COMPETITIONS THIS 2019/20 SEASON?

36. WHO CROSSED THE BALL FOR MO SALAH'S HEADED GOAL AGAINST MANCHESTER CITY IN NOVEMBER?

37. WHICH PLAYER SCORED AGAINST THE REDS IN A DEFEAT AT ANFIELD IN OCTOBER SOME 22 YEARS AFTER HIS FATHER HAD DONE LIKEWISE IN HIS OWN CLUB'S LOSS?

38. WHO MADE HIS LIVERPOOL DEBUT IN THE CARABAO CUP WIN OVER ARSENAL IN OCTOBER?

39. WHO MADE HIS FINAL LIVERPOOL APPEARANCE AS A SUBSTITUTE IN THE 4-0 CHAMPIONS LEAGUE SEMI-FINAL VICTORY AGAINST BARCELONA AT ANFIELD?

40. NAME THE THREE SUBSTITUTES THAT JÜRGEN KLOPP BROUGHT ON IN THE CHAMPIONS LEAGUE FINAL?



ANSWERS...

1. Roberto Firmino (at Man City); **2.** Aarhus and Huddersfield Town; **3.** Curtis Jones, Rafa Camacho, Ki-Jana Hoever; **4.** Brighton (30,682); **5.** Roy Hodgson; **6.** Fabinho; **7.** Watford; **8.** Naby Keita; **9.** Roberto Firmino; **10.** Lionel Messi (Barcelona); **11.** Twelve; **12.** Man City; **13.** Trent Alexander-Arnold, Andy Robertson, Virgil van Dijk, Sadio Mane; **14.** Huddersfield Town; **15.** Georginio Wijnaldum; **16.** Rhian Brewster, Caoimhin Kelleher; **17.** Sporting Lisbon; **18.** Tammy Abraham (Chelsea); **19.** French (Stephanie Frappart); **20.** Divock Origi; **21.** Ryan Babel (Fulham); **22.** Sadio Mane; **23.** James Milner (v MK Dons); **24.** Joel Matip; **25.** Conor Coady (Wolves in the FA Cup); **26.** Divock Origi; **27.** Crystal Palace, Salzburg and Arsenal; **28.** Xherdan Shaqiri; **29.** Estadio Metropolitano; **30.** Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain; **31.** Fernando Llorente (Tottenham and Napoli); **32.** Alberto Moreno and Simon Mignolet; **33.** Trent Alexander-Arnold; **34.** Adam Lallana (v Man United); **35.** Lucas Torreira (Arsenal); **36.** Andy Robertson; **37.** Erling Braut Haaland (Salzburg, son of Alf-Inge who scored for Leeds); **38.** Neco Williams; **39.** Daniel Sturridge; **40.** James Milner, Divock Origi, Joe Gomez.



THE NEW OFFICIAL LIVERPOOL FC QUIZ BOOK

Are you an LFC brainbox? Then test yourself with the Official Liverpool FC Quiz Book! To celebrate the Reds winning their sixth European Cup, we have SIX copies of the book to give away!

There are 100 quizzes and 1,000 questions on all aspects of the Reds, bang up-to-date on the 2019/20 season and its stars. Full of fascinating facts and featuring the all-time greats as well as those of fleeting moments of fame, this is sure to be something any true supporter can't put down! The book is compiled by lifelong fans and official club statisticians, Dave Ball and Ged Rea, who also devised the quiz on 2019 in this issue.

We have picked question 857 (the number of appearances Ian Callaghan made for Liverpool FC) as our competition teaser:

Who scored his last goal for the Reds in a 2-2 draw at Manchester City in May 1996?

To be in with a chance of winning, email your answer, name, address and contact phone number with 'LFC Quiz Book' in the subject line to liverpoolfcmag@reachsport.com before 18 December 2019. Normal Reach PLC competition rules apply.

The Official Liverpool FC Quiz Book is available from club stores now.

AND WIN THE NEW OFFICIAL LIVERPOOL FC TRIVIA CARDS!

And now you can test your Liverpool Football Club knowledge with a brilliant pack of trivia cards! The official Liverpool FC Trivia Quiz contains 50 cards with 200 questions on all things Reds, including multiple-choice, true or false and 'Name The Season' questions that will challenge even lifelong Liverpool fans.

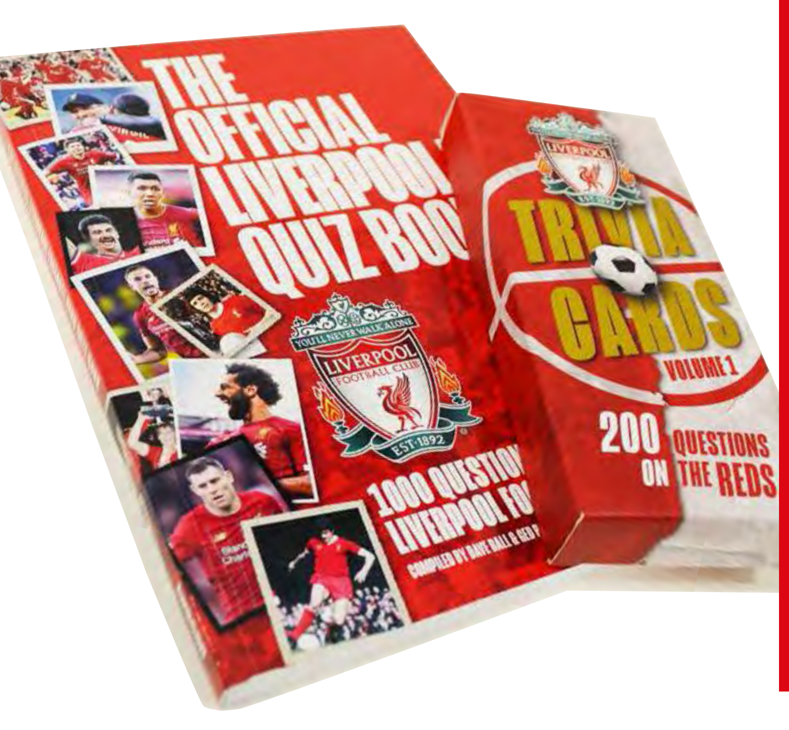
The quiz is up-to-date for the 2019/20 season and its handy size makes this pack of trivia cards ideal for taking with you on matchday when you're waiting for the action to start!

Again, we have SIX packs to give away.

Against which team did Liverpool register their first Premier League win at Anfield under Jürgen Klopp?

To be in with a chance of winning, email your answer, name, address and contact phone number with 'LFC Trivia Quiz' in the subject line to liverpoolfcmag@reachsport.com before 18 December 2019. Normal Reach PLC competition rules apply.

The Official Liverpool FC Trivia Quiz is available from club stores now.





LION

Dejan Lovren is smart, brave, patient and positive – four words which, he explains, epitomise the LFC philosophy

Liverpool three. Manchester City one. When the final Premier League table is published in May and the story of the season is analysed, that rip-roaring yet hugely tense Anfield victory may well be one of the defining results of the 38-game campaign. The evidence of last season certainly points to it.

The Reds only lost one league game last season, 2-1 at Manchester City, yet it proved to be the difference between winning the league and not. The two sides drew 0-0 at Anfield earlier in the season and City won the title 98-to-97 on points.

Had Liverpool won at Anfield or the Etihad they would have finished season 2018/19 as Premier League champions. So while it isn't even Christmas yet and talk of a two-horse title race is disrespectful to both Leicester City and Chelsea who are very much in contention, the significance of beating Manchester City at Anfield cannot be ignored either.

Defender Dejan Lovren is a Liverpool v Manchester City veteran. Last month's Premier League encounter was the eleventh time he has lined up for the Reds against the Citizens – he's faced no opponent more often during his career here – and the eighth time he has been on the winning team, drawing once and losing a couple.

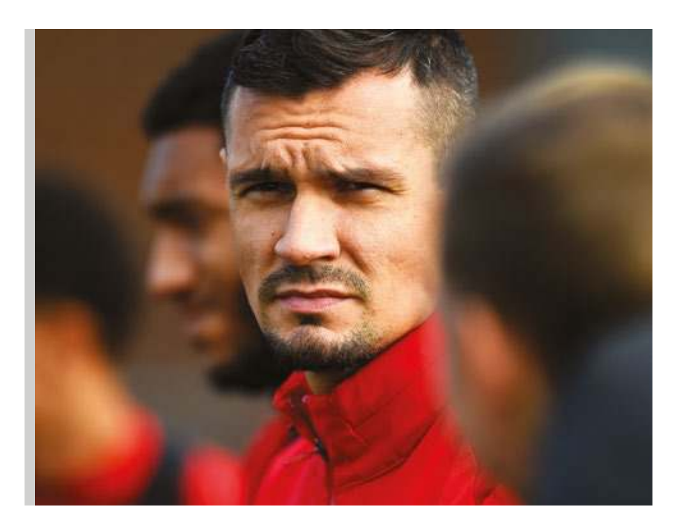
It's an impressive record given the level City have been at during the half-decade Lovren has been a Liverpool player, so how significant does he think beating Pep Guardiola's side will be in the title race?

"After that victory the manager came into the dressing-room, took his hat off and said, 'Boys, well done. I really respect what you did on the pitch. It was incredible, such a high tempo is difficult to play at'.



Words: Chris McLoughlin





IT'S NOT EVEN HALFWAY THROUGH THE SEASON SO WHAT IS IMPORTANT IS THE WORD 'PATIENT' – WE TAKE IT GAME BY GAME AND DON'T THINK ABOUT ANYTHING MORE

"There were only good words from him, but it's too early to be thinking about titles. We are not even halfway through the season. What is important is the word 'patient'. I think we have managed to understand what it means because in the last few seasons we didn't understand.

"We made some mistakes, but I think we are now smarter, braver and more patient. I think we know what we're doing – we're taking it game-by-game – and we don't think about anything more than that.

"We are in five competitions, which is good for all the players because we have a big squad. Unfortunately there will be injuries but this will mean a lot of playing time for every squad player."

Playing down title-talk before Santa and his reindeer have flown over Anfield or the turkey has been carved is, of course, not unexpected. But surely Lovren accepts that such big results – and going into December with a healthy gap between Liverpool and those trying to chase them down – creates lofty expectations?

"We've been in the same situation last year and I have spoken previously about expectations. We manage it game-by-game. We don't look back at who is behind us or if we are eight, nine, 10 or 12 points ahead because it does not help and it does not change anything. We are focused only the next game and I think it is a key point to not look back.

"I wish that we have a perfect season, but I do not know many that have. There will be times when we have a bad day but we need to manage this, control this and be positive.

"I say 'be positive' because around football there are a lot of people in the media who will manage to make bad stories if we lose a game, but I think we are quite clever in the dressing-room about this. We have clever players."

A recurring theme of Liverpool's season so far has been an ability to dig out wins even when things have gone against the Reds, the victory at Aston Villa being a prime example.

Liverpool were a goal down when Roberto Firmino had what looked like a perfectly good equaliser ruled out by the assistant-referee and confirmed by VAR due to 'his armpit' being 'marginally ahead of the last Villa defender' according to a Premier League statement.

Despite this, and the Reds still trailing 1-0 with just four minutes to play, goals from Andy Robertson and Sadio Mane turned a likely defeat into a dramatic 2-1 win, encapsulating the spirit of this Liverpool side.

Dejan believes that attitude, desire and belief will serve Jürgen Klopp's team well even when a result next goes against them. "Even if something bad happens with a result we should just keep our focus on how we play and how we produce our qualities on the pitch. I think we're doing that.

"Even sometimes when we don't play very well we manage to win the game. This is what you need to do to be a contender to win the Premier League.

"Man City did that in the season before last. They lost against us at Anfield, but then they managed to win almost every other game so I think they know how to deal with that. I think we also know, at the moment, the same.

"With injuries you never know, but like I said our squad is big and more often than not we show we are capable of winning games even when we are without some of our players."

On the subject of injuries, goalkeeper Alisson has been back in goal since late October – barring that Merseyside derby absence through suspension – having missed over two months of football after suffering a calf injury against Norwich City during the opening match of the season.

Somewhat unusually the Liverpool goalkeeper failed to keep a clean-sheet in his opening nine appearances of the season but was also only beaten once in each of those games with the Reds unbeaten in all of them.

Clean-sheets or not, the role the Brazilian has played since signing for LFC is not lost on Lovren who believes Alisson is a calming influence on the team.

"He has had pretty big impact here, I would say. I knew him already from when he played in Rome. We played against him and we saw the calmness and the diagonal balls he could play straight to the chests of the full-backs. It was incredible to see a goalkeeper like that.

"I was thinking 'wow, he is really amazing,' and then we were lucky enough to get him here. It is really enjoyable to play with him and, after a big injury like he had a couple of months ago, it is like nothing happened. It says a lot about him to come back so sharp, calm and ready.

"Having him back definitely makes you feel more comfortable because his reactions are amazing. "I'm seeing it every day on the training ground and I would say, like we as defenders, he is



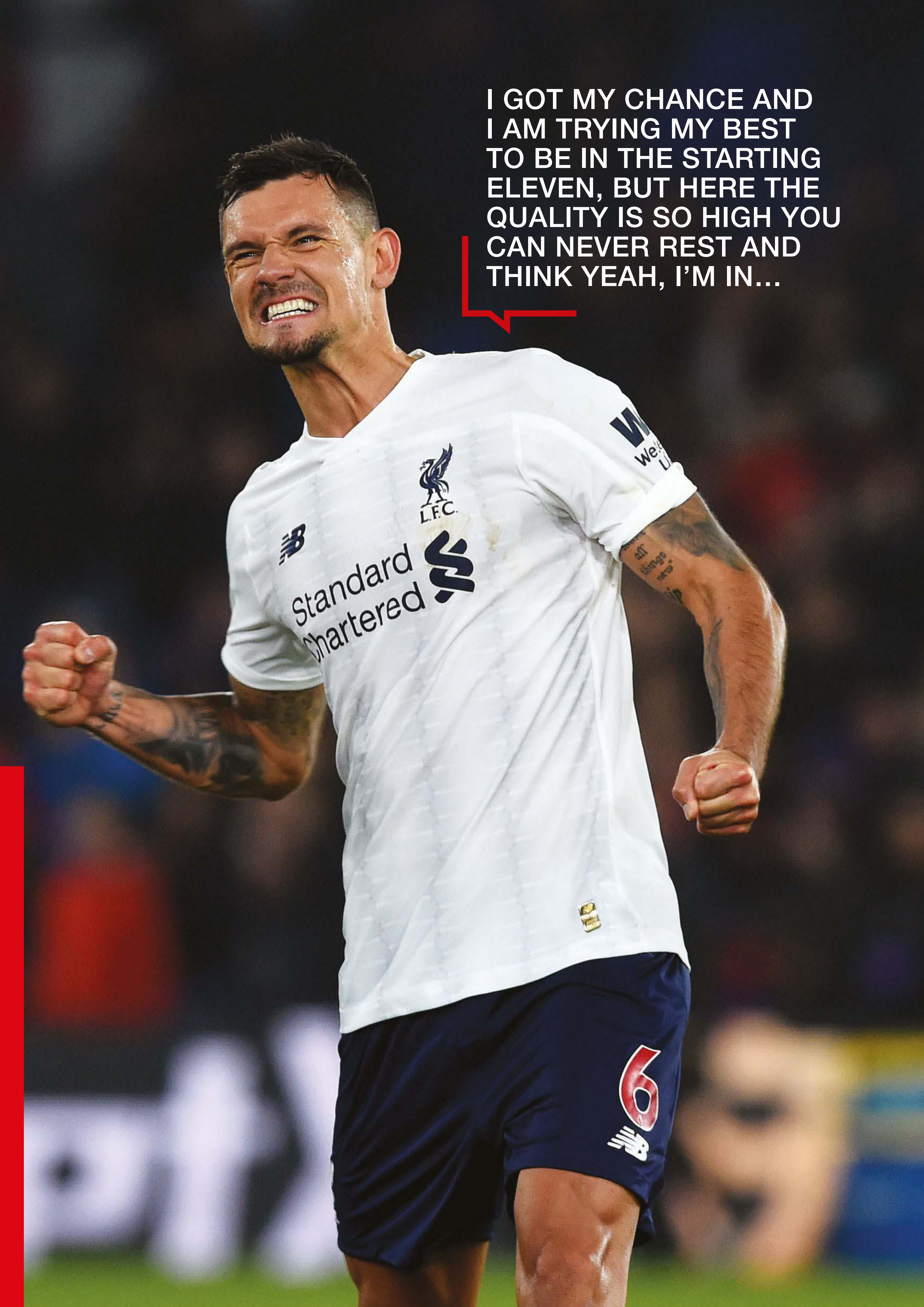
reading the ball – where it could bounce, where shots could go – and his timing is much more perfect than ours.

"It's great to have him back. He's a good fella, always positive, always smiling, always drinking his tea! He's the number one goalkeeper for Brazil and he is talking always with Fab and Roberto in Portuguese. Sometimes I even understand something when they are talking!"

Lovren himself is also enjoying life back in the Liverpool team. After returning from the 2018 World Cup finals with a recurring stomach injury it took the Croatian international time to win his place back in the side last season.

Having done so, a hamstring injury suffered at Wolves in the FA Cup third round in January meant he was back on the sidelines until March, by which time Joel Matip had been playing so well in his absence that he retained his place alongside Virgil van Dijk in the heart of the defence.

The 30-year-old made just 18 appearances in season 2018/19 and has made no secret that he considered his future in the summer with a couple of Italian clubs reportedly interested. But, after speaking to the manager and hearing that he remained in his plans, he stayed on Merseyside and knuckled down in training.


I GOT MY CHANCE AND I AM TRYING MY BEST TO BE IN THE STARTING ELEVEN, BUT HERE THE QUALITY IS SO HIGH YOU CAN NEVER REST AND THINK YEAH, I'M IN...
L.F.C.
Standard

A knee injury suffered by Matip in October opened the door for him to return to regular first-team action and he believes remaining patient has paid off. "It was not so easy to come back and fit into a team that is playing the last eight to 10 games always together. For two months I was out, on the sidelines, but I have been patient and I have been working behind the scenes with the 'other team', I would say.

"I've got my opportunity and at the moment I am in. I'm trying my best to be in the starting XI for the next games, but here the quality is so high you can never rest and say 'Yeah, I'm in'.

"I started from zero again to show, to prove, that I deserve to be in the first XI. That's football, you know? When you've been months out in the last season and not had so many minutes on the pitch it's about restarting and in the pre-season I did that.

"I worked harder, I worked behind the scenes and maybe it the season didn't start as well as I had hoped, but I was speaking with the manager and it [the message from him] was 'patience, patience, patience'. That is easier to say than do, but I did it and in the end everything came back."

Lovren's performances, particularly in the Anfield wins against Tottenham and Manchester City, have earned him some big post-match hugs from Klopp. It's hardly a new thing for the Liverpool manager to embrace his players, but it remains something that Lovren appreciates.

"He does this with every player, especially after the big games when you show your emotion. We hug each other and it means a lot for me.

"Even if I'm used to it for years, it's good to be hugged when you haven't played for a long time. It's good to feel that you are again important here – this is what matters for every player."

Of course we can't finish an interview with Dejan Lovren without mentioning his friendship with Mo Salah. The pair are well known for being mates and anyone who saw their recent 'Face Off' video, in partnership with Western Union, on the club website will realise they will banter about anything from haircuts and pizza toppings to ping-pong.

During that particular recording they agreed to settle their claims to be the better table-tennis table player by being filmed for a one-off game to be held in the future, and when Lovren is



asked about Salah he can't help but send a few cheeky jibes in his mate's direction before praising his quality.

"We have an incredible friendship since day two – not day one. He was quite strange on day one and didn't say how are you? Or who are you? Or anything like that! Which was also maybe my fault, but since day two we just clicked together and have been smiling from that day.

"It's incredible to work with him and have a friend like him... and I think he's thinking the same about me [laughs]. It's just enjoyable to be here with him and share these moments.

"We won the Champions League together and I know what that means for him. I know the background he came from and he knows the same situation with me.

"I'm honoured that I am a team player who can play with him because he is an unbelievable player who puts a lot of effort into his work. People don't see that, but I see it every day. Unfortunately he has had some small injuries, but he will come back to his best form."

As has Dejan Lovren.

PATRIOT GAMES

Liverpool's stars clocked up the air-miles on international duty during 2019, with final appearances, trophy triumphs and crucial qualifications all in the mix



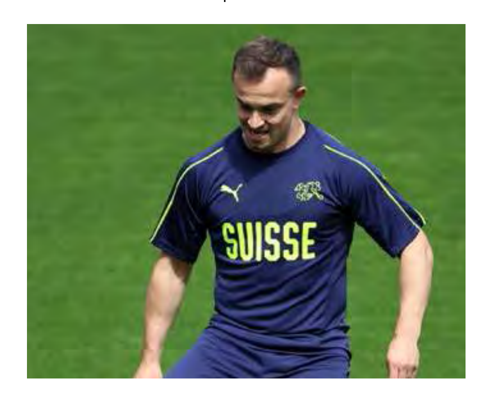


Dejan Lovren Croatia

Eighteen months after helping Croatia reach the World Cup final, Dejan will be hoping to play a part in next summer's Euros. He now has 57 caps and played in six of the eight qualifiers, scoring in a 4-0 win away to Slovakia, as Croatia topped Group E.

Xherdan Shaqiri Switzerland

The Swiss topped a tight Group D ahead of Hungary and third-placed Republic of Ireland. Shaq's injury troubles saw him miss out on the qualification process but he did help his country to the last four of the Nations League in June. He started both the semi-final defeat by Portugal and the third-place play-off against England which the Swiss lost 6-5 on penalties.



Virgil van Dijk, Gini Wijnaldum Netherlands

Virgil captained the Dutch to their first major tournament finals since 2014 with Gini scoring eight times as they finished runners-up in Group C behind Germany. He was on target in a 4-0 home win over Belarus and a 4-2 victory over Germany in Hamburg, then netted twice in a 4-0 triumph away to Estonia. Two more came in Belarus – check out his thumping second goal on YouTube – and he finished with a hat-trick flourish in a 5-0 win over Estonia in Amsterdam.

Wijnaldum and VVD also featured for Holland in their 1-0 loss to Portugal in the first UEFA Nations League final in June.

More recently their compatriot Ki-Jana Hoever helped Netherlands to the last four of the Under-17s World Cup.

Andy Robertson Scotland

Steve Clarke's men finished third behind Belgium and Russia in Group I of Euro 2020 qualifying but were assured of a play-off spot after winning their UEFA Nations League group last year.

Robbo, who scored a brilliant goal in the 2-1 home win over Cyprus, should be skipper against Israel in a one-off semi-final on 26 March with the winners facing Norway or Serbia for the right to play in next summer's tournament.

Divock Origi Belgium

Roberto Martinez's men made light work of qualifying, topping Group I with a perfect record of 10 wins out of 10. They also scored 40 goals. Divock has been a regular member of the squad but started just one of the qualifiers, the 4-0 win away to San Marino in September. He came off the bench as the Belgians signed off by thrashing Cyprus 6-1 in Brussels.

Harry Wilson Wales

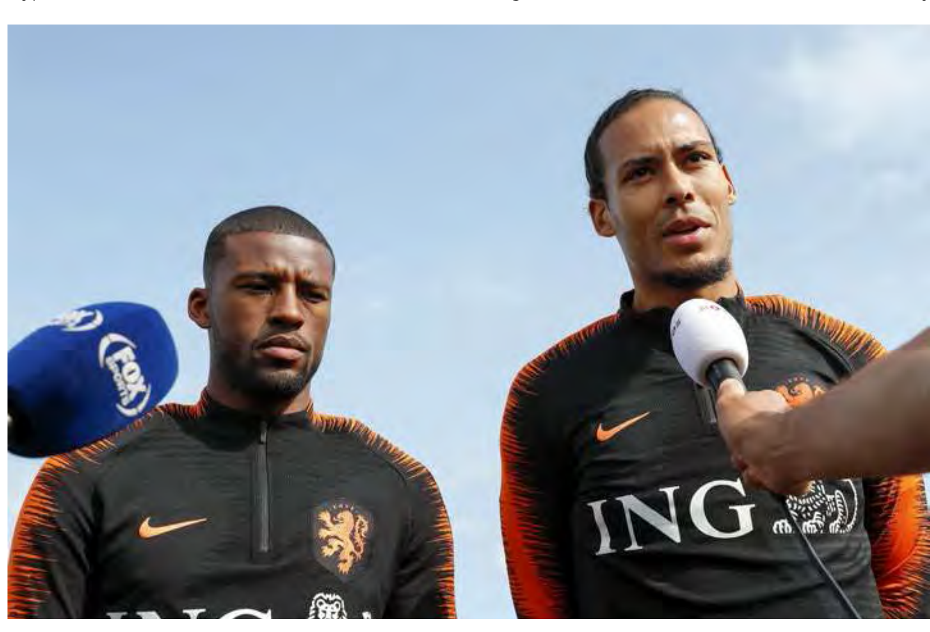
The Liverpool loanee played his part in all eight qualifiers as Ryan Giggs's side qualified behind Croatia. Winger Harry, currently on a season-long loan at Bournemouth, scored in their penultimate game, a 2-0 win in Azerbaijan.

Roberto Firmino, Alisson Becker, Fabinho Brazil

One of the highlights of the year for Bobby and Alisson was winning the Copa America on home soil – they started all six games on the *Selecao*'s route to glory. Firmino scored twice, including the crucial second that settled the semi-final win over Argentina in Belo Horizonte, while Alisson kept five clean-sheets and was only beaten by a penalty in the 3-1 win over Peru in the final.

Fabinho, a surprise omission from coach Tite's 23-man national-team squad, returned for his country's Global Tour fixtures in the second half of the year.

Brazil's focus will now be on defending their crown at the 2020 Copa America to be held in Argentina and Colombia from 12 June to 12 July.



Naby Keita **Guinea**
The Africa Cup of Nations was a disappointment for Naby who was named in the squad despite struggling to overcome the injury that had kept him out of the Champions League final. He made two appearances in the groups but played no part in the 3-0 defeat to Algeria in the round of 16. He was back for the opening AFCON 2021 qualifier against Mali, scoring in a 2-2 draw in Bamako.



Sadio Mane **Senegal**
Sadio's bid to win the Champions League and Africa Cup of Nations within seven weeks fell at the final hurdle. Senegal reached the final in Cairo but were beaten 1-0 by Algeria.

He netted three times in the tournament, finishing joint runner-up behind Golden Boot winner Odion Ighalo of Nigeria.

Mo Salah **Egypt**
Playing in a home Africa Cup of Nations was a highlight for Mo but his Pharaohs were unable to make it beyond the last 16, losing 1-0 to South Africa in Cairo. He scored in two of the three group-stage victories, over DR Congo and Uganda, taking his tally for his country to 41 in 67 games.

Jordan Henderson, Trent Alexander-Arnold, Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain, Joe Gomez **England**
Reds skipper Jordan played in England's first six Euro 2020 qualifiers before missing the last two due to illness, while Trent (three apps), Ox (two and one as sub) and Joe (one as sub) also appeared in the campaign as the Three Lions won seven of eight games. Oxlade-Chamberlain was on target in the 7-0 win over Montenegro at Wembley last month.

Jordan, Trent and Joe also featured in the UEFA Nations League finals as England claimed third place following their shoot-out win over Switzerland in the play-off.



...has stock was destroyed or ruined
—Oxley's Department Stores Limited

Shankly to manage Liverpool

by Horace Yates

LIVERPOOL F.C. last night named Mr. Bill Shankly, manager of Huddersfield Town, as their new manager, and he will take up his duties not later than a month from now.

He was chosen from a list of about forty applicants, but only three or four were of the calibre required.

Although Mr Shankly will enjoy more managerial freedom at Anfield than any of his predecessors (the late George Kay, Don Welsh and Phil Taylor), he comes to his new appointment without a contract for the simple reason that he prefers it that way.

He will command the biggest salary ever paid by Liverpool F.C., which means it will be over £2,000.

The militant approach

Mr Shankly will bring with him a new militant approach to the task, which he realises has as its goal promotion to the First Division.

He revels in the challenge and last night told me: "When I come to Liverpool I shall be taking my jacket off, and shall expect everybody to take their jackets off.

"The First Division is where Liverpool should be, and that is where I aim to put them."

When I spoke to Mr Phil ... whose resignation ... vacancy which Mr ... he said: ... that ...

HAVE AN... ICE EASTER

...ER BLADES ICE RINK, PRESCOT RD., LIVERPOOL 7

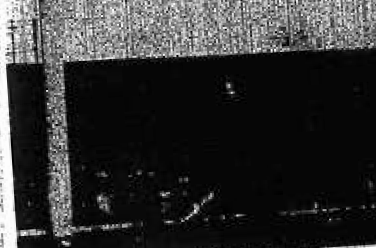
Liverpool Echo and Evening Express

No. 25,018 SATURDAY, APRIL 21, 1962 THREEPENCE

UP THE REDS! DIVISIO... HERE WE ARE AGA...

Lewis's Double Made Triumph Certain

LIVERPOOL 2, SOUTHAMPTON 0



The roar all Anfield was waiting to cheer. Kevin Lewis ... give Liverpool the lead.



BY MICHAEL CHA...

The secrets of Anfield struggle to hard-won stardom, by manager BILL SHANKLY

Shall I let you into a secret? When I was asked to become manager of Liverpool in November 1959, do you know why I accepted? It was because I had played at Anfield and known what it was like to have that Kop to beat as well as the team. I had sat in the stand and seen others battle against it and I knew that by and large the people who produced that roar were men just like myself, who lived for the game and to whom football was their abiding passion. I knew that no matter what trials lay ahead, I would be at home among folk of that kind. Football is my life—and that's how it is with them.

Of course, I am delighted that I have fulfilled my pledge by assisting Liverpool back into the First Division, where they belong and where they have always belonged, but one of the greatest thrills I capture from it all is the knowledge that our wonderful supporters have seen the accomplishment of their ambition. Without their intense loyalty, how much harder would it all have been for each one of us!

MANAGER BILL SHANKLY



JACK ROWE says—

ANFIELD WAS NEVER LIKE THIS BEFORE



DECEMBER MAN

Sixty years ago this month **Bill Shankly** arrived at Liverpool FC and things would never be the same again

Let's begin not quite at the beginning. Season 1958/59: twenty-year-old striker Roger Hunt signs for Liverpool from Stockton Heath as the Reds finish fourth in the Second Division and go out of the FA Cup at non-league Worcester City in the third round.

Season 1959/60: manager Phil Taylor resigns and Liverpool appoint Bill Shankly, previously boss of Huddersfield Town, as his successor on Tuesday 1 December 1959.

The new man tells *Echo* reporter Horace Yates: "When I come to Liverpool I shall be taking my jacket off and I shall expect everybody to take their jackets off. The First Division is where Liverpool should be, and that is where I aim to put them."

Former boss Taylor tells the paper: "Please tell Mr Shankly that I wish him all the luck in the world. I hope his highest ambitions are realised." The Reds come third and Hunt scores 21 league goals.

Season 1960/61: Liverpool are third at the start of 1961, third still at the end of the season. Striker Dave Hickson, signed from Everton just before Shankly's arrival, scores 16 goals including a hat-trick versus Leyton Orient. Season 1961/62: promoted! Boosted by summer signings Ian St John and Ron Yeats, the Reds are top from start to finish and end the campaign eight points clear of runners-up, Leyton Orient again.

It's a return to the top-flight after eight long years, and Shankly tells the *Liverpool Daily Post*: "Shall I let you into a secret? When I was asked to become manager in November 1959, do you know why I accepted? It was because I had played at Anfield and known what it was like to have that Kop to beat as well as the team.

"And I knew that the people who produced that roar were men just like myself, who lived for the game and to whom football was their abiding passion.

"Football is my life – and that's how it is with them."

Season 1962/63: a creditable eighth-place back in the top flight (neighbours Everton are champions) and an FA Cup adventure that ends in the semi-finals with defeat to new bogey-team Leicester City.

Season 1963/64: champions! It's a sixth First Division title as Shankly's Reds finish four points ahead of runners-up Manchester United; they move into top spot on 30 March 1964 and stay there.

Liverpool take the crown on Saturday 18 April 1964 with a 5-0 win over Arsenal in front of almost 50,000 at Anfield; all the goals are scored before the hour-mark. On the day of the game the *Echo* describes the scenes before kick-off: "Thousands were locked out when the gates

League title crown is a perfect fit for Liverpool
SHANKLY'S SAINTS MARCH RIGHT IN

ANFIELD TRIUMPHANT

Kop roar and Reds in superb form shatter the world champions



Liverpool players acknowledge the Infield cheers after their great performance ...

Inter Stunned And Dominated

Italian Press Is Lavish With Praise For Liverpool

Celtic, Pride of Scotland

YES, IT'S LIVERPOOL THE GREATEST

Second half goals from Smith and Strong put them into final



LIVERPOOL MISS THAT EUROPE CROWN

They were lucky, says Shankly

Three glorious years of Anfield football history

CHAMPIONS, CUP WINNERS, CHAMPIONS!



were closed at 1.45pm with a capacity crowd inside. Scenes outside had been bordering on chaos with mounted police busy controlling the crowds, reinforced by special constabulary.

"From 1.45pm onwards the ground was tightly packed with an exultant crowd waiting for the kick-off. 'They are just singing their heads off – they love it', said an official."

An *Echo* cartoon features skipper Ron Yeats on a steamroller, an 'Anfield sparrow', team mascot 'Master McCann', 'the chap who climbed into the joist of the Kop roof' and 'the Kop Choirmaster'.

Strikers Hunt and St John score over 50 league goals between them and there are three 1963/64 ever-presents (42 appearances each): Ian Callaghan, Gordon Milne and Peter Thompson.

Season 1964/65: Liverpool reach the FA Cup final for a third time in their history – will this be the year the Reds finally bring the trophy home?

Daily Post writer Horace Yates thinks so: "The preliminaries are over, seconds are out and the bell is about to sound. Wembley 1965 is ready to stage the greatest battle of the Roses for many a long year, and at the end of today's Cup Final, Liverpool or Leeds will be entitled to enter with pride on their roll of honour, Cup winners for the first time in their history...

"A tremendous battle then and a victory procession for Liverpool through the streets of the city on Sunday evening. Ee Aye Addio – we will win the Cup!"

And they do, beating Leeds 2-1 at Wembley. The next day, Sunday 2 May 1965, the Reds bring the trophy back for the first time and the scenes in the city have to be seen to be believed.

The *Echo* reports: "Skipper Ron Yeats and the team were greeted by roars of 'Liverpool! Liverpool! Liverpool!' from 50,000 throats in the vicinity of Lime Street station, and St George's Plateau was a solid mass of people. One senior police officer said: 'This makes the Beatles reception look like a vicarage tea party!'"

Two days later on a tide of Anfield emotion Liverpool beat Inter Milan 3-1 in the first leg of their European Cup semi-final, but the Italian champions controversially progress 4-3 on aggregate.

Season 1965/66: champions! Liverpool clinched their seventh title with a 2-1 win over Chelsea at Anfield on 30 April 1966, finishing six points clear of runners-up Leeds.

Roger Hunt gets the goals, bringing his total to 32 – the sixth of nine seasons in which he'd be top scorer. But the fans are the stars for the *Daily Post*: "Bill Shankly is right. There's no football crowd anywhere to compare with the Anfield throng for their fervour and spontaneous wit. Entirely original, they are not so much part of a scene as scene-stealers...

"The team's lap of honour produced a frenzied salute and I don't think I have ever seen a more colourful spectacle than when they slowed their pace in front of the Kop."

In the European Cup-Winners Cup the Reds beat Celtic in the semis but lose to Borussia Dortmund in the Glasgow final. Naturally Shanks feels that the best team lost...

PLEASE PLEASE ME

The Beatles

ASK ME WHY



Echo

EE-AYE-ADDIO THEY'RE THE CHAMPIONS AGAIN



IN OTHER NEWS

The M1 motorway opens (1959); Real Madrid win their fifth consecutive European Cup (1960); the first episode of *Coronation Street* is screened (1960); Russia's Yuri Gagarin becomes the first man in space (1961); Brazil win their second World Cup (1962); *Please Please Me* is the first no1 for the Beatles (1963); US President John F Kennedy is assassinated (1963); an audience of 73 million watch the Beatles on America's *Ed Sullivan Show* (1964); the Mary Quant miniskirt appears in London (1965); England win the World Cup (1966); Celtic become the first British club to win the European Cup (1967); Jürgen Klopp is born (1967).



"WHERE'S THE OFFICE, SON?"

Lifelong Reds fan **Billy Howard** was a youth-team player when 'The Boss' walked into Melwood for the first time...

On a cold, damp December evening at Melwood training fields in 1959, it was business as usual for 17-year-old youth player William Howard, 'Billy' as he was more usually known.

Billy's love of Liverpool Football Club had started during the late 1940s. From the age of five he'd cheer on his heroes, Albert Stubbins and the great Billy Liddell, from the old Boys' Pen in the left-hand corner of the Spion Kop.

Billy would spend much of his childhood during the 1950s and early 60s living his dream, playing for Liverpool FC's youth teams as a left-half. He'd train on a Tuesday and Thursday evening at Melwood under the guidance of Tom Saunders, Rueben Bennett, Joe Fagan and Bob Paisley. Indeed over the years he'd play or train with six of the team that won the FA Cup for the first time in 1965.

During the 1959/60 season, following Phil Taylor's departure in mid-November, the Reds had been left without a manager for four Second Division games. Billy recalls what happened on Tuesday 15 December 1959...

"On that day I went to Melwood straight from work on my bike. I was early, the only one in the dressing-room. I started getting changed and sat down reading the *Echo*. The headlines were all about Bill Shankly becoming the new Liverpool manager.

"All of a sudden, the door opens, in walks this fella wearing a black tracksuit top, shorts, socks and baseball boots. Crikey, it's him! Shanks was stood there before me – what a presence.

"'Where's the office, son?'" he asked me, 'Through there, to the left, sir', I replied nervously. 'Thanks. Son', he said and off he went. He only had arrived in Liverpool the night before and there he was, ready for action. I had only ever seen the previous manager, Phil Taylor, four times in over three years – each time he was always wearing a suit and tie...

"From the day he arrived, whenever Shanks was around there seemed to be a different atmosphere around Melwood. Although he didn't get involved in the training of the youth teams, I remember those dark winter nights when he would wander round Melwood speaking to Bob Paisley and his team.

"Shanks didn't let the grass grow under his feet and it was noticeable that things were changing – as young lads, we also felt them. I remember previously the great Joe Fagan would say, 'Right lads, follow me', and off we would go running through Huyton, Prescot and further. We'd get back to Melwood, eight, ten miles later.

"The first time this happened, me and the lads started to make our way back to the dressing rooms and Joe shouted, 'Where you going, lads? We start training now!'

"Fortunately Shanks stopped all these gruelling runs. More short sprinting, drills and small-sided games were introduced. And, as strange as it may seem, actual footballs were introduced into our work more.

"This made me realise that when Shanks was having those initial conversations with Bob and the staff, he was observing the methods and putting in the changes he wanted. Of course, us trainees were made-up with the changes – but it was also obvious that the coaching staff were enjoying them too. The shackles had been unlocked!


Billy with grandsons

Words: Carl Clemente



Billy at Anfield last November

Lancashire Football League Division III
LIVERPOOL "C" v. BURNLEY "C"
29th August, 1959
K. Moses, S. Crombie, J. Everstead, D. Corkhill, F. Molyneux, P.
R. Costello, T. Horton, V. Gill, W. Howard, J. Morgan.
Result: 7-2. Scorers: Gill 3, Costello, Morgan, Horton, W. Howard.

"Shanks would quickly become known as 'The Boss'. He was large-as-life and ready to do whatever was needed to haul Liverpool out of the doldrums and become, in his now famous quote, 'a bastion of invincibility'.

"I had the uncanny feeling that I had spoken to someone with special qualities on the day he first arrived at Melwood. He galvanised the fans, the players, the club, from the very start. He told anyone who would listen, 'This will be the best team in the world'. Anyone who was a Red believed him and was ready to join in the revolution of Liverpool Football Club...

"By the end of the 1961/62 season, I'd been struggling with ankle-ligament damage and, after eight years at LFC, I had a huge decision to make. Holding back the tears, I told Tom Bush, who was in charge of the youth teams back then: 'I'm leaving Liverpool Football Club and I have no interest in moving to another club'.

I had always said I would never play for anyone else – for me it was Liverpool or nothing.

"In 1962, the season I finished playing, Liverpool were finally back where they belonged, in the top tier of English football – just what Shanks had promised when he arrived.

"He was making us dream week-by-week, it was such a pleasure to follow the team home and away. Win, lose or draw – us Kopites would always be there. Back in those days it was: 'What's the team today? The same as last week!'

"During the 1970s and 80s I worked with local kids, helping them to develop their football skills. I tried to carry on the enthusiasm and integrity that I'd seen in The Boss. I often found myself asking, in situations I came across: 'What would The Boss do here?' or 'What would The Boss say to this player?'

"No matter how brief your interaction with him was, you were always left knowing that you'd been in the company of someone out of the ordinary. It didn't matter in the city of Liverpool whether you were a Red or a Blue. The whole city – man, woman and child – respected Bill Shankly.

"It was a joy to be a Red in those days. Shanks gave us so much more than just winning trophies. He gave us pride, belief, great players, lifelong memories and so much enjoyment.

"When The Boss retired in July 1974, I was truly devastated. At that time all I could think was: 'How would we ever survive without him?'

"It's difficult to imagine what Liverpool FC would be like today if he hadn't come in and shook the club to its very foundations, put the heart and soul back into it. He returned the pride to the fans and the city. He made the people smile."

"WITHOUT HIM THIS CLUB WOULDN'T BE THE SAME"

Earlier this 2019/20 season, ahead of Liverpool's Super Cup match against Chelsea in Istanbul, manager **Jürgen Klopp** was asked the following questions at a UEFA press-conference...



What was it like for you personally, to get your hands on that Champions League trophy?
"It was really nice, it was overwhelming. But touching the trophy is not something you really need in life. Winning it, if you have the opportunity, is completely different, so I enjoyed that much more than holding the trophy by myself. Watching all the others holding it, to be honest, was nice..."

It was a moment of huge history and this club's all about history, particularly in the European Cup. What would Bill Shankly have made of that achievement, do you think?
[Laughter] "I've no idea. Unfortunately we never met. That's a shame, honestly. You know, when people talk about Bill Shankly, it's not true that he was a human being! If you hear people talking about him, he could do pretty much everything. I like that, when people are remembered like that.

"Nobody will ever be as big as he was because he had very difficult circumstances when he started, obviously. He built that club from the ground and that's an achievement.

"Thankfully nobody has to do that or it's a job nobody has to do anymore because the club has now reached a size and a status where things like that will never happen again – but without him this club wouldn't be the same.

"What would he have done with it? I think he would have said: 'Yes, nice, let's go for the next one'."



A SHIRT FOR BOB

The wonders of technology bring Liverpool's past and present together to commemorate 100 years since Bob Paisley's birth

Main Liverpool FC sponsor Standard Chartered, working closely with the Paisley family, have produced a five-part video series where the modern-day Reds respectfully join forces with a computer-generated Bob Paisley as part of their 'Project Stand Red' campaign.

Using smart technology, including Voice Modulation, Artificial Imagery (AI) and Computer Generated Imagery (CGI), the films are released from November 2019 into January 2020 and can be watched at **StandRed.com**

Not just his likeness will feature. Audio clips have been analysed to recreate his voice too, seeing the CGI Paisley interact with Ian Rush and even the current manager, Jürgen Klopp.

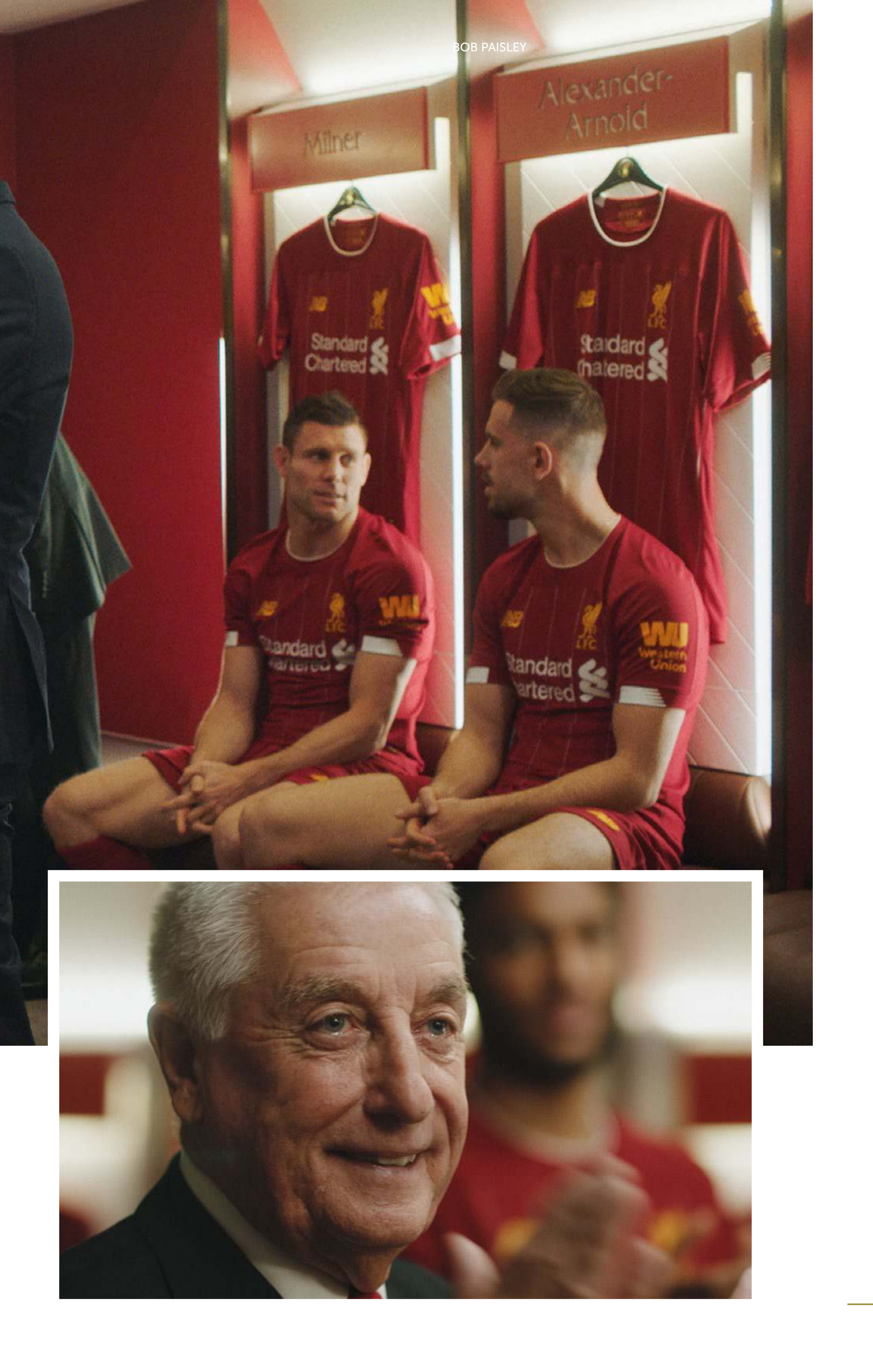
Here we have a sneak preview of Paisley receiving a gift from both current Reds and Anfield greats who played under him...





Anfield legends Roy Evans, Phil Neal, Bruce Grobbelaar, Terry McDermott and Ian Rush all star in part two of the series alongside current Reds Joe Gomez, James Milner and Jordan Henderson.

"Bob, you gave me my first Liverpool shirt, and it changed my career," says Ian Rush in one video. "It's a privilege to give this shirt in your honour."


Milner
Alexander-
Arnold
Standard
Chartered
Western
Union

It's a much different place now as the computer-generated Bob walks out at Anfield. Liverpool FC's 2019/20 kits pay homage to Paisley, with his signature featuring on the inside-neck of every jersey. The home shirt of course brings back the famous pinstripes of the early 1980s worn during his reign.

"The technology is amazing, I thought it was a picture," says Bob's son Graham. His granddaughter, Rachael Stevenson adds: "My little boy never got to meet Grandad but [with these films] there will be some sense of him knowing him."




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“WORKING WITH **JÜRGEN**, IT’S LIKE HAVING A **MASTERCLASS**. THE WAY HE LOOKS AT THE **FOOTBALL GAME**, THE WAY HE UNDERSTANDS A **PLAYER**, THE WAY HE UNDERSTANDS A **YOUTH PLAYER** AND THE WAY HE UNDERSTANDS **LIFE**”

Vitor Matos, who joined the Liverpool FC staff as elite development coach in October, on closing the gap between Academy and first-team

Interview: Harri Aston



Vitor, how are you settling into life at Liverpool?
It's been an amazing start. I am loving the city and I am loving the club. Everyone has been really kind and welcoming. For me it's unbelievable, to come after the season has already started and then for everyone to receive me so well, so it's been a fantastic start for me.

How would you describe your role?
My primary goal is to develop players. We can do this in different ways but what is most important is that we understand that football is a collective game, so we need to develop players in a way they will interact with each other.

It's very important that we create and have an identity, and this identity of the player and the way we play is worked on in all training sessions. The first-team have an amazing way of playing and this way of playing supports the individual development, so my role is to enable the players to understand the principles and major ideas of how the first-team plays, and use this to aid individual development.

We know what the player's identity is and we will addresses weaknesses in order to get him closer to the first-team, and at the same time refine simple details that will help him as a player.

So the major idea is to create this big development of the player and to link the Academy with the first-team. So the gap from between the Academy and the first-team will in time will get smaller.

You have worked in numerous positions in the past, from head-coach to performance analyst, technical director and opposition scout – how has that helped you become the coach you are now?
There is a famous doctor in Portugal who says, 'They who only know about medicine, don't know anything about medicine' and I say that a coach who only knows about football doesn't know anything about football.

Having these different roles has helped me with my understanding of the club, the player and the team. I know how they can help a head coach or a club. They give you an idea of what will be the process of the player's thinking, and the work we can prioritise now that will help us in the long term.

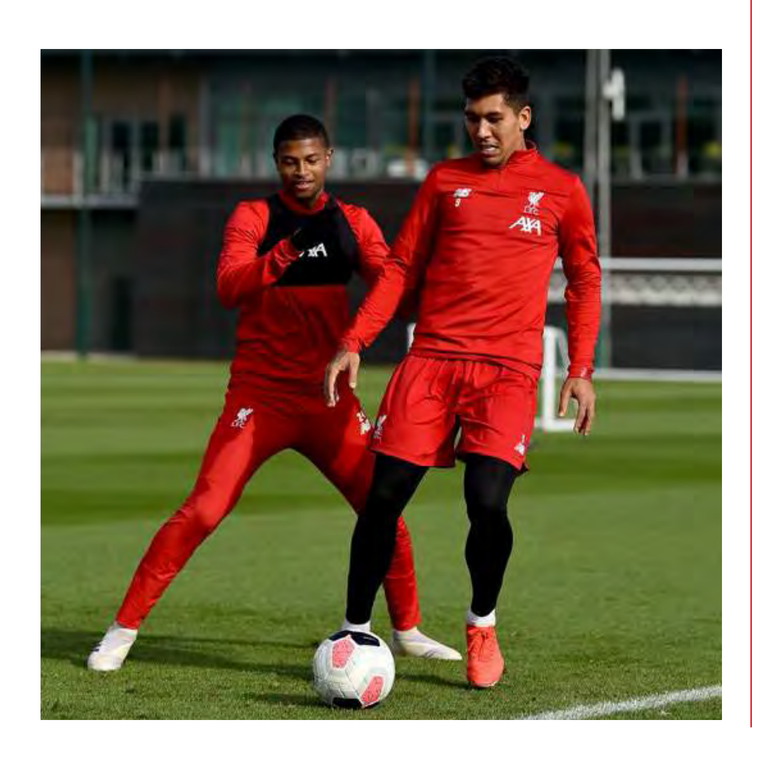
When a player is 12, I need to see what kind of player he will be when he is 18, and what the player requires to reach that level.

Pep Lijnders described you recently as the club's most important signing of the season – how did you feel about that?
Pep is more than a friend, he is a someone who is a source of inspiration, especially for me. His passion for the job, his professionalism, is really inspiring. We've known each other for more than nine years. When I receive a compliment like that, for me it is amazing. But I know it also puts big expectations on me and this is what I really like. I just want to work and show I belong here.

How have you found working with Pep, Jürgen and the Academy coaches so far?
Working with Jürgen, it's like having a masterclass. I am really pleased and happy with the opportunity to work with the best not only because it is Jürgen but the way he looks at the football game, the way he understands a player, the way he understands a youth player and the way he understands life.

The way he fills all the game ideas, all the tactical principles, all the team organisation with passion and with love is amazing because that is what gives you the way of playing. For sure it makes my job easier because the environment that he and all the technical staff create here is amazing for the development of players.

Right now, I was in a meeting with Alex [Inglethorpe], Critch [Neil Critchley] and Barry [Lewtas] and we discussed each player detail by detail: where they are at the moment, what we expect in the future. These kind of things are great because what I feel is that everyone at the club are really working hard to help the players' development



IT'S AMAZING WHEN A YOUNG PLAYER CAN COME HERE AND TRAIN WITH THE LIKES OF HENDO, ROBERTO, MO, SADIO – IT HELPS THEM REACH THE NEXT STEP

in all the best ways and with high standards.

One of my major goals when I arrived was that I needed to know the Academy staff as well as I know the Melwood staff, especially Alex and the coaches that are responsible for the training sessions.

These kind of relationships are already really good, and more than talking, it's about creating an environment of trust and an environment that can help everyone – especially, in the end, the players.

It is a great opportunity for the Academy players when they have the chance to train at Melwood...

It is amazing when a young player can come here and have a training session with the likes of Hendo, Roberto, Mo and Sadio. In the exercise room, during a counter-pressing run, in a five-a-side game, he can see how they move, how they train, how they work to create space, how they press... These kind of moments are unbelievable for a youth player. Working with the first team helps the player reach the next step in their development.



TRAINING HARD, WORKING HARD, PUTTING THE TEAM FIRST… THESE KIND OF VALUES ARE THE LIVERPOOL MENTALITY

Your experience includes working with players from very young ages to Porto's 'B' team – how impressed are you with the depth of talent coming through from the Academy?
I really think we have amazing players here in the Academy, players with a big talent in them. Sometimes talented players only need guidance, space and opportunities. When they have these connections between quality training sessions, quality moments to compete, quality moments to train, you can really start thinking of development. You need to have a good base of potential like we have here in the Academy in Kirkby, so it's been amazing.

It's Liverpool, you know already they will be talented players for sure, but when you look at them it's unbelievable. The mentality that they have from being here to the technical quality they have is really good. The Academy is doing a good job respecting the individual development of each talent, having a plan for each player, knowing what will be their next step.

How important is it to help the young players understand Liverpool FC's values?
The character of the coach will be revealed in the character of the team. When we look to the first team, we can see the impact Jürgen has on all these players.

The values the first team, shown to everyone in a game or training session, should be the core values of the club, so that means no complaining, training hard, working hard, putting the team above you and helping the club to achieve what the club wants.

So these kind of values are the Liverpool mentality, and it is this mentality which makes us stronger.

Next season the Academy and first-team will all be on one site – how much easier will that make things?
It will help not only because it is a world-class facility in which to train but it is somewhere we can create a real culture of the club as everyone will be in one place. The feeling we have when go will be, 'This is Liverpool FC, this is where the magic happens!'

Having this new facility will also help with the sharing of information between the different departments. The Academy players will be able to see how the first team trains and see the life of a professional player, while the first-team staff can look at the talents we have. This connection will be really amazing.

What would you most like to help the young players achieve both in the short-term and medium-term?
In the short-term it is a case of prioritising what is the most important thing for that player to work on, whether that be restructuring or refining something, so he can perform well and show his talent.

Medium-term, we can say of all the things we are working on, what will help make his process or project more consistent? In the end, for sure he will need to become a Liverpool FC player. For me, seeing a young player making a debut in the first team, the feeling you can have with that is unbelievable.

Five teenagers figured in the Carabao Cup win over Arsenal in October – you must have been extremely proud of how they performed?
It was amazing. More than that, it is amazing that we have a coaching staff that believed that was possible to happen. It is possible for us to mix experience with youth talents and we can still be competitive while also playing really good football in a game style that pleased the fans and pleased everyone.

To draw 5-5 and win on penalties, it's a game I will not forget when I am 90 years old! For sure it will be the case with the players as well. It was unbelievable.

WORLD DOMINATION... THE SAME OLD DREAM





…as James Bond once said to Dr No. But let's hope later this month we'll be saying yes as the Reds head to the Middle East to bring home the FIFA Club World Cup



The 2019 and 2020 FIFA Club World Cup tournaments are being played in Qatar as test events for the 2022 FIFA World Cup, with seven teams featuring at three venues in Doha.

European champions Liverpool play their first fixture against the winners of 'Match 2', in what will be the semi-final, at the 45,350-capacity Education City Stadium. The final will also be played here three days later.

South American champions Flamengo play their own first fixture against the winners of 'Match 3', the other semi, at the Khalifa International Stadium.

The Brazilian team are managed by Jorge Jesus, who was in charge of the Benfica side beaten by the Reds in a Europa League quarter-final tie of 2010.

His Flamengo side won the Copa Libertadores for the second time in dramatic fashion last month when they came from 1-0 down against River Plate in Lima to win 2-1 thanks to a late brace from on-loan Inter Milan striker Gabriel Barbosa.

The 23-year-old striker known as 'Gabi-gol' took his tally to 40 for the calendar year but was also sent off in the dying seconds.

Flamengo, who beat Liverpool 3-0 to win the competition in 1981, also have a player called Everton in their squad: attacking midfielder and no7 Everton Ribeiro.

Of the other five teams competing, Al-Sadd Sports Club come from the host city of Doha and were 2018/19 Qatar Stars League champions. They have previous in the tournament, reaching the semi-finals in 2011 where they lost 4-0 to eventual champions Barcelona, managed by Pep Guardiola.

Al-Sadd will first face Hienghene Sport, a side from the North Province of New Caledonia, an overseas territory of France in the Pacific Ocean. They qualified after winning the Oceania Football Confederation Champions League in May.

Hienghene are the first club from New Caledonia to compete in the Club World Cup and only the second to represent Oceania who are not from Australia or New Zealand.

The winners of this 'Match 1' will play Monterrey. Like the Reds, this will be the Mexican club's fourth appearance in the tournament – they previously played in three on the spin in 2011, 2012 and 2013. In 2012 they reached the semi-finals before losing 3-1 to Chelsea. This year they qualify as champions of the CONCACAF Champions League.

Meanwhile Al-Hilal will play Esperance de Tunis in 'Match 3'. The Saudi Arabian club will be competing at the tournament after winning the Asian Football Confederation Champions League for the third time last month, defeating Japanese side Urawa Red Diamonds 3-0 on aggregate.

Their former Swansea City frontrunner Bafetimbi Gomis was voted as the competition's most valuable player and also finished as top goalscorer.

Esperance de Tunis, winners of the Tunisian League for the past three seasons, were crowned African (CAF) champions for the fourth time in May, albeit in controversial circumstances.

They drew 1-1 with Egyptians Wydad Casablanca in Rabat and were leading 1-0 in the return match at their home stadium in Tunis when their opponents walked off in protest after an equaliser was ruled out for offside and the VAR system failed. In July the Court of Arbitration for Sport threw out Casablanca's case and the Tunisians were declared champions.

Liverpool's most recent appearance was in 2005 in Japan as European champions when they beat Deportivo Saprissa of



Will there be a re-match with Flamengo?

Costa Rica 3-0 but contrived to lose 1-0 to Sao Paulo in the Yokohama final.

The Reds dominated the match against the Brazilians but had three goals disallowed, two strong penalty appeals waved away and also hit the woodwork twice.

Former Liverpool boss Kenny Dalglish was positively fuming: "I watched the Sao Paulo game and still don't know how we didn't win – I still can't understand how all three of those goals were disallowed.

"The lads should be flying home with their heads held high because they've given a great account of themselves and the Premier League. They played some great football, scored some great goals and were unfortunate not to add the trophy to the cabinet."

In his 2016 autobiography, keeper Jerzy Dudek recalled: "It was an amazing experience to travel to Japan and play in the World Club Championship. This competition is still not treated seriously enough and I don't understand why.

"We, however, treated it very seriously. Rafa planned everything to the most minute detail and was so determined to win it that he even stayed with us in Tokyo after news reached him that his father had passed away.

"Our flight took 12 hours, but to counter the jet-lag and time-difference we weren't allowed to sleep – the doctor was running up and down the aisle waking up anyone who nodded off! We also had to keep getting out of our seats and walking up and down the plane.

"When we landed in Japan we were all handed sunglasses and the coach that was taking us from the airport to the hotel had its curtains closed.

"Apparently the strength of the light at that time of day is far stronger in Japan than we were used to in Europe so we had to try and protect our eyes. This was the level of detail Rafa and his staff went into!

"As well as he prepared things, though, I think Rafa got it wrong on the pitch. We beat Costa Rica's Deportivo Saprissa 3-0 in our semi-final with Peter Crouch, our tall striker who had been signed that summer, scoring twice.

"But despite this he put Crouch on the bench for the final against Sao Paulo and played Fernando Morientes instead.

"There was no rational explanation for it. You can't say it was 'rotation' for a cup final to decide the world club champions! Crouch had a tough start at Liverpool, he didn't score in his first 18 games, but his goals against Saprissa meant he now had four in five appearances.

"He was absolutely flying – full of confidence – and we could see the surprise on his face in the dressing-room when he heard he wasn't playing.

"We conceded a first-half goal but Benitez waited until the 79th minute of the match to make any substitutions. He only put Peter on with five minutes to go and although Florent Sinama-Pongolle had a late goal wrongly ruled out for offside, we lost 1-0.

"It was a big disappointment as it is the one big trophy that Liverpool have never won and we were all desperate to be the first players to bring it back to Anfield."


Japanese Reds in 2005 and (below)
Peter Crouch scores against Saprissa


Steven Gerrard arrives in Yokohama

Twenty-one years previously, Joe Fagan's Reds had lost 1-0 to Independiente of Argentina, in a one-off match on a brown, bumpy pitch in Tokyo.

After an 18-hour flight from London followed a five-hour coach trip to the capital, the Reds lost Mark Lawrenson to a hamstring injury in training. They fell behind after only six minutes. Claudio Marangoni, once of Sunderland, crossing for Jose Alberto Percudani to beat Bruce Grobbelaar. Thereafter it was a story of Liverpool's struggle to equalise and the occasional Argentine counter-attack.

Fagan said: "Independiente are a good defensive, tactical team and we could find no way through. We were disappointed with the result but I wasn't disappointed with the display."

Back in 1981 came that heavy defeat to Flamengo. Manager Bob Paisley was never a fan of the showpiece but was persuaded to take his team to the Far East when the Football League granted Liverpool special dispensation.

But the Reds arguably didn't take it too seriously and they were beaten by a Flamengo side that included the legendary midfielder Zico. Two goals from striker Nunes and one from Adilio won it on a day when Liverpool wore player names on the backs of their jerseys for the first time.

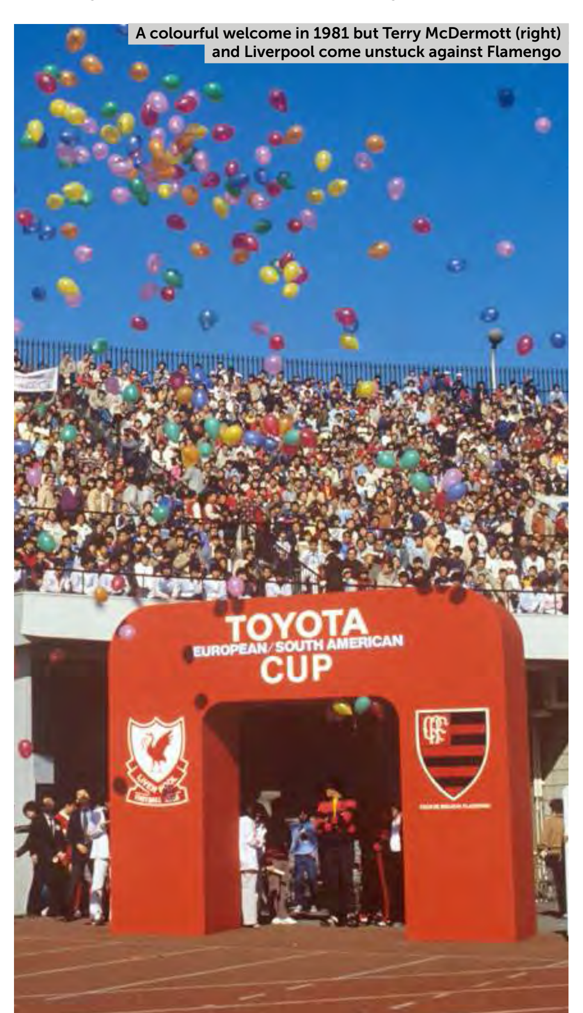
In his book *Behind the Shankly Gates*, defender Phil Thompson wrote: "The game was a shame because Bob was concerned about us not getting involved in any altercations with the opposition and not doing anything wrong. He wanted to make sure we upheld the credentials and good name not only of Liverpool, but England.

"We did that and in fairness to Bob, he held his hands up afterwards and took responsibility for us not being fired-up for the game. We went there and treated it too much as a friendly, doing the right thing for the FA's sake and our own.

"The game took place in December, right in the middle of our season and, for once, our focus wasn't right. Bob didn't want us flying into tackles because he was concerned about the South American mentality and he didn't want an incident.

"We probably went over that line and went too far the other way, but it was all a good experience."


Craig Johnston in action against Independiente in 1984



A colourful welcome in 1981 but Terry McDermott (right) and Liverpool come unstuck against Flamengo



CLUB WORLD CUP 2019 SCHEDULE

- **Match 1:** Al-Sadd v Hienghene Sport Wed 11 Dec (5.30pm UK time).
- **Match 2:** Al-Hilal v Esperance de Tunis Sat 14 Dec (2pm UK time).
- **Match 3:** Monterrey v Winners of Match 1 Sat 14 Dec (5.30pm UK time).
- **Semi-final 1:** Flamengo v Winners of Match 2 Tues 17 Dec (5.30pm UK time).
- **Semi-final 2:** Liverpool v Winners of Match 3 Wed 18 Dec (5.30pm UK time).
- **Third-place:** Sat 21 Dec (2.30pm UK time).
- **Final:** Sat 21 Dec (5.30pm UK time).

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ROBBO'S FOXY ADMIRER

Andy Robertson has got many admirers and ahead of Liverpool's Boxing Day trip to Leicester City, Foxes left-back Ben Chilwell has admitted he's one of them. "Andy Robertson has a great story, right? Almost quit, like I did, kept at it, pushed himself past the limits he thought he had, and now he's one of the best in the world. I had a good chat with him a few months back at Trent Alexander-Arnold's birthday dinner. I told him he's class and whatnot and he said the same to me. It was really cool to chat with him."



HAVING A BALL

When he hasn't been turning in his usual consistent performances on the field for the Reds, James Milner has been helping make a big impact off it. On the opening night in December, The James Milner Foundation passed the £1million barrier at their 'A Night in Hollywood' ball held at Event City in Manchester. Proceeds from the ball, which was attended by Jürgen Klopp and several of Milner's LFC team-mates, will go towards the work of the Foundation, which aims to promote healthy recreation for the benefit of young people in the UK. The Manchester event followed a lunch at Liverpool's Hilton hotel the previous Thursday.


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17.11.2019

Remember the date – it's when history was made yet again at Anfield as thousands of football fans witnessed Liverpool FC Women's first WSL fixture at the famous stadium

Words: William Hughes

Liverpool FC and 23,500 Merseyside football fans helped make history for women's football last month.

On Sunday 17 November 2019 they took their seats in three of Anfield's four stands to record the largest crowd for a ladies' match involving the Reds. It was by far the biggest attendance to watch a Liverpool FC Women's fixture since the club was founded 30 years ago.

The game formed part of a programme of fixtures that made up the FA's first Women's Football Weekend, an initiative aimed at putting the focus on the women's game during a men's international break and a scheme that is set to become established as an annual event.

More than 70,000 watched the Barclays FA Women's Super League fixtures that day with a similar number having helped set create a new England record for the Lionesses friendly against Germany at Wembley the previous week.

The Anfield fixture also involved the small matter of the Merseyside derby. With tickets priced at a fiver and including the option of bringing up to three children for free, it was real family affair in L4.

Liverpool captain and central defender Sophie Bradley-Auckland said: "All the girls were buzzing to be playing at Anfield. It was a huge honour for me to be leading Liverpool out at such an historic stadium.

"When I think back to an injury I had a few years ago, there were days when I didn't know whether I would ever play again let alone at this level.

"Playing at Anfield is something so many kids all over the world dream of doing. Captaining a Liverpool team here is something extra special. My family were here with my little daughter Macie supporting us and it was a great occasion for them too."

There was a real buzz of excitement around the ground leading up to kick-off with George Sephton, the 'Voice of Anfield', spinning his discs and the familiar Anfield playlist adding to the sense of occasion.

As the teams walked out to the sound of You'll Never Walk Alone, there was a tangible sense of just how far the women's game has come with thousands of young fans delighted to see the ladies in red (and blue) in action at one of the cathedrals of European football.

Reds CEO Peter Moore, who is also chairman of Liverpool FC Women, said: "We are committed to the growth of the women's game. We have all seen the wonderful trajectory for women's football and this day marked another major step on that journey.

"It had always been our hope to host a women's game at Anfield this season and the Merseyside derby against Everton represented the perfect occasion to make it happen. Our ethos of 'two teams, one club' was at the heart of what everyone saw and enjoyed."

Liverpool had hoped to make it a winning occasion but despite dominating proceedings, the Reds lost 1-0 to an Everton goal scored on the stroke of half-time, the result of an uncharacteristic error by goalkeeper Anke Preuss.

A bright start to the contest saw lifelong Liverpool fan Niamh











Charles revelling in the chance to step out on the hallowed turf. In the lead-up to the game she had posted pictures on social-media of herself on the Anfield ground tour as a child. Now she threatened to give the Reds an early advantage on several occasions, while fellow wide player Melissa Lawley also came close to doing so.

But it was Kirsty Linnett, the attacker playing in the no10 role, who was nearest of all to breaking the deadlock. Her header looked for all the world like finding the net at the Anfield Road end only for Everton's Finnish international goalkeeper Tinji-Riikka Korpela to make a stunning reactions save.

Preuss, the Reds' Standard Chartered player of the month for September, has been in fine form this season so it was heartbreaking for the German to be culpable for what proved to be the only goal of an engaging fixture.

Everton captain Lucy Graham took a speculative shot from outside the area, later admitting she was well-aware of the fact the game was well into its one minute of added-time at the end of the first half. It was the only time Preuss had really been called upon and it presented what would normally have been a routine save for someone of her ability. However, the ball somehow evaded her clutches and span behind her before crawling over the line.

It was a cruel blow for the Reds and as the half-time whistle shrilled seconds later, Liverpool FC Women's goalkeeper coach Jennifer Herst was soon onto the pitch to console the Reds no1.

Former men's goalkeeper Chris Kirkland, at the game as part of the LFCTV team, worked with Preuss during his time on the club's management and coaching staff last season and felt her pain. "I know how good a keeper she is and she'll be hurting," he said. "But she's a strong girl and I'm sure she'll bounce back."

With manager Vicky Jepson's team talk ringing in their ears, the Reds relished kicking towards the Kop after the re-start and were roared on with added vigour every time they pushed forwards.

The introduction of tricky attacker Rinsola Babajide as a substitute for the final half-hour also gave the Reds added impetus as she caused all sorts of problems for the Everton defence.

Charles saw a shot blocked and then dragged another presentable







chance wide with time ticking away. Everton were effectively reduced to a rearguard action as they sought to catch the Reds cold with an occasional counter-attack.

In the end it was not to be for a Liverpool team searching for their first league win of the season but their legion of fans applauded the team warmly at the final whistle.

Many young fans saw their days made complete as the Liverpool players wandered over to the pitch side track in front of the Sir Kenny Dalglish stand to chat with supporters, sign autographs and pose for selfies.

After the game, Everton manager Willie Kirk admitted his side had ridden their luck: "It is always good to get a win when you are not at your best, and I don't think we were at our best in terms of keeping the ball. But in the second half we showed real character and defended really well.

"It was daunting in the second half, with eleven Liverpool players and the power of the Kop coming at you, but we held on. I've thought for a while this season that Liverpool are in a false position and I don't think any differently. Their front-four can be frightening but we defended well.

"The atmosphere here was great and it actually felt closer to 50,000 in the crowd towards the end. But to get a crowd of 23,500 here is excellent and I think it moves the game in the right direction."

One of the club's guests at the game was Julie Griffiths who had captained Liverpool Ladies when they first played a league game at Anfield back in 1997. The Reds also played an FA Cup semi-final against Arsenal in front of the Kop in 2013. However, the crowd for this fixture dwarfed both of those previous games in L4.

Liverpool right-back Becky Jane also doubles up by coaching youngsters at the club's Regional Talent Centre. She said: "I thought we were the better team. I think it was the best that we've played this season. It's gutting but we're all behind Anke as we're all human and we all make mistakes.

"It's the biggest crowd I have ever played in front of and it was incredible having more than 23,000 here. Hopefully they will come back to see us again. To hear the crowd roar was fantastic."







Local, national and international media gathered in the 'mixed zone' just inside the tunnel area to gain thoughts and opinions afterwards. As they did, Reds forward Linnett trudged past, her face a picture of despondency.

She later tweeted: "I honestly have no words for today, I'm absolutely gutted but the support was incredible. The result didn't go our way but I'm so proud to be a part of this club – we go again!"

And despite the immediate disappointment of a derby defeat, manager Jepson, who has worked with the club for more than a decade, kept her focus trained on the bigger picture. "I'm gutted that we gifted them a goal because otherwise I don't think they would have scored," she said.

"The amount of opportunities we created in front of goal was encouraging but they're the fine margins in the game and we've got to make sure we find the back of the net.

"But there were 23,500 fans here today and we certainly earned their respect because we were the better team and I'm not just saying that because I'm the Liverpool manager.

"I'm so proud of all the players today, every single one of them, the subs that came on and the players that didn't get to come on. It was

a proud moment for our club and we will push on from here, 100 per cent.

"We've never lacked belief. We've never questioned what we're doing and we're always in a good headspace. That's my job: to make sure that we're always a tight-knit group and focusing on getting that next result.

"I know the players will hurt after a derby defeat and rightly so but there are a lot of games coming up that we've got to focus on and we've got to keep pushing on.

"We have to stay positive. That wasn't the performance of a team that sits bottom of the league and that's why I'm still happy and proud of them. Those girls would absolutely run through a brick wall for me and for this club. They'll continue to do that and we will get it right. There's no panic and we will make sure we climb up that table."

Of the Anfield experience, Vicky said that she hoped it would be the first of many such occasions. "There'll be more opportunities to play here. Peter Moore was with us in the dressing-room and the club have been fantastic to make sure this can go ahead, so I'm honoured to be at a club that wants to keep pushing the women's game forward.

"Rome wasn't built in a day but I'm working very hard behind the scenes to make sure that our women's team is getting the support and the applause that it deserves.

"It's a step in the right direction for the women's game to add to the growth that's been evident nationwide and I'm sure there are going to be more and more games played at Premier League stadiums. I'll keep knocking on the door to make sure that we can play here again because that red carpet of Anfield is the best carpet you could ever play on."



















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JOHN WHEELER

Liverpool FC's oldest living captain passed away in November, aged 91, and the thoughts are everyone at the club are with his family and friends. Crosby-born John was a right-sided attacker who joined the Reds aged 28 from Bolton Wanderers in September 1956. He'd go on to make 177 appearances, scoring 23 goals – including a five-minute hat-trick against Port Vale – and was appointed skipper by manager Phil Taylor for the 1958/59 season. He left in 1963 to become an assistant-trainer at Bury.

John was a guest at Anfield in April 2018 when club chief-executive Peter Moore presented him with a framed photo including this message from Jürgen Klopp: "LFC is only the club it is today thanks to players like you YNWA."

WORLD CLASS



By next summer the club's new training facility, combining first-team and Academy operations, will be open for business



A big, big change will take place in the next close-season as the first-team squad moves from Melwood, its training base for over half-a-century, to the club's all-new complex in Kirkby.

Things are gathering pace. Since the installation of the last steel beam earlier this year, the facility has taken shape with the external brickwork now completed and construction beginning on the interior.

The new 9,200sqm training centre creates a combined first-team and development squad facility, each of which has their own identity, along with new first-team pitches and parking within the site.

The state-of the art facilities comprise of two gyms, a full-size sports hall, pool, hydrotherapy complex and specialist sports rehabilitation suites. There are also dedicated TV studios, press-conference facilities and offices.

The design of the building provides a clean, modern and warm environment with lots of natural daylight and simple but crisp detailing which celebrates the club's history.

The large indoor sports hall – a unique feature – along with the hydrotherapy area are now formed and provide shared facilities for the U23 and first teams.

The new first-team pitches are nearing completion, with artificial fibre-stitching currently being installed ahead of the new grass being sown in spring 2020. Work on this section's maintenance area is also complete, including a borehole to extract groundwater to irrigate the pitches.

Meanwhile another important part of the project has been completed: the club giving back to the local community by handing over the ownership, operation and maintenance of the newly-redeveloped Eddie McArdle community pitches, located at the north end of the site.

Andy Hughes, the club's chief operating officer, says: "We are really pleased with the progress that has been made and



once the new training ground and its associated buildings are complete, the project will provide first-class amenities for our players and staff.

"It has always been our aspiration to provide a clear pathway for progression for our youngsters from the club's Academy to the first team, and the two facilities are now intrinsically linked.

"We are also extremely proud to be investing in the Knowsley area to provide improved sports facilities for the community of Kirkby with the redevelopment of the Eddie McArdle Community Pitches. Earlier this month we were pleased to officially hand over the facilities to Knowsley Council to own, operate and maintain moving forward.

"Work at the training ground is on track for completion in summer 2020 when we will see the first-team and youth football operations come together on one site for the first time in the club's history."

Plans were first revealed for the new complex in early 2017, and though it felt like a wrench for many to see that the Reds would be leaving Melwood, the fact remained that it was limited in space and unable to accommodate the club's longer-term ambitions.

It will always be remembered, however, as an historic part of LFC history, having been first acquired in 1950 then developed extensively by Bill Shankly who called it "a sorry wilderness" when he was appointed manager in December 1959.

"I really love Melwood but football changes," said Jürgen Klopp when the new proposals were announced nearly three years ago. "We can't stay like we always were and hope we can compete with the other clubs. It's really good that our owners give us the opportunity to make this big step in the future.

"Twenty five years ago Melwood set the level. In those 25 years a lot of things happened. It's fantastic but we have no space for anything... Bringing the Academy and the first team together is one point but it's also about improving a lot of things that we can't improve here. It will only be good for the future of the club."


Artist impressions: Liverpool FC/KSS





Foundation

THE CLUB'S OFFICIAL CHARITY

REDS STARS GIVING BACK

Joel and Shaq take part in LFC Foundation and Red Neighbours events while Women's players give breakfast club a boost!

A knee injury has kept Joel Matip absent from the football and the training field recently, but while he recovers he's been helping the club's official charity, LFC Foundation, bring young and old together as part of its #iwill campaign.

The Reds defender chatted with a group of Year 6 pupils from Whitefield Primary School in Anfield as they showed residents from Millachip nursing home how to use technology such as video-calling to keep in touch with friends and family – all part of addressing the social isolation often found among the elderly community.

As a partner of the #iwill campaign, LFC Foundation has generated a total project fund of £1.25m to deliver a three-year project engaging more than 5,800 individual children aged 10 to 14.

Joel said: "It's great to see the difference that the children want to make - they're so inspiring. Meeting the elderly fans was also really special and I'm grateful to have been asked to attend."

Matt Parish, director of LFC Foundation, said: "Children and young people play a key role in communities and by participating in programme's like #iwill they feel empowered because of the positive difference they have made to their environment and society.

"It's been really rewarding to see how things like mobile phones and bingo can bring together the generations in a way where everyone is having fun and learning something."

Meanwhile one of Joel's team-mates, Xherdan Shaqiri, is back in full training after his own period in the treatment room, and he's also been in Kirkby to support the new Walking Football programme launched by Red Neighbours, the club's community initiative.

At All Saints Catholic High School, the Reds ace met participants, took part in the warm-up and cheered on from the sidelines. Liverpool legend Alan Kennedy, a current England

Walking Football player and familiar face at these sessions, was also there.

Walking Football is designed to encourage over-50s to engage in regular physical activity in a fun, social setting. Originally launched in the Anfield area in 2017, it's proven incredibly successful and grown from six participants to more than 60 each week.

Red Neighbours has expanded its delivery into Kirkby as part of LFC's commitment to being a good neighbour, with the club set to open its new training ground in the area in summer 2020.

Shaq said: "It's great to see people from the older generation pulling on their shirts, playing football and keeping fit. You can see how much these sessions mean to the guys."

Club chaplain and Red Neighbours team-member Bill Bygroves added: "We are extremely passionate about helping the elderly community to remain physically active, and sessions like these are designed to bring people together to enjoy themselves in a relaxed and social environment.


Shaq with Alan Kennedy and All Saints pupils



"We hope to build a strong team here in Kirkby and are looking forward to welcoming new players over the coming weeks."

Shaq also spoke to 50 All Saints pupils from years 7-12 with an important message: work hard in class and you can achieve your dreams.

"It was such a brilliant experience having a first-team player visit our school," said JJ, the school's head boy. "He told us about his own story of working his way up to where he is today."

Elsewhere Liverpool FC Women players paid a surprise visit to local families on the final day of the Red Neighbours October half-term breakfast clubs at Anfield, with Jade Bailey and Kirsty Linnett giving out free tickets for the FAWSL derby with Everton at Anfield.

Other special guests during the week included Roy Evans, Ian Callaghan and Margaret Aspinall (chair of the Hillsborough Family Support Group).

Red Neighbours breakfast clubs are a regular fixture at Anfield during the school holidays as part of its commitment to food-poverty and education and providing memorable experiences for young people.




Kirsty and kids at the Anfield breakfast club

MIGHTY TREAT TIMES TWO!

Club mascot surprises local family with European LFC shirts complete with new Right To Play logo





Club mascot Mighty Red surprised a local family at the Anfield retail store recently and gifted them with European shirts with the new Right To Play logo ahead of the Champions league game against Napoli.

The family, which included Evie aged eight, Isaac aged ten and their mum Sarah, were selected for a surprise treat because of their commitment and enthusiasm to LFC Foundation's Open Goals programme.

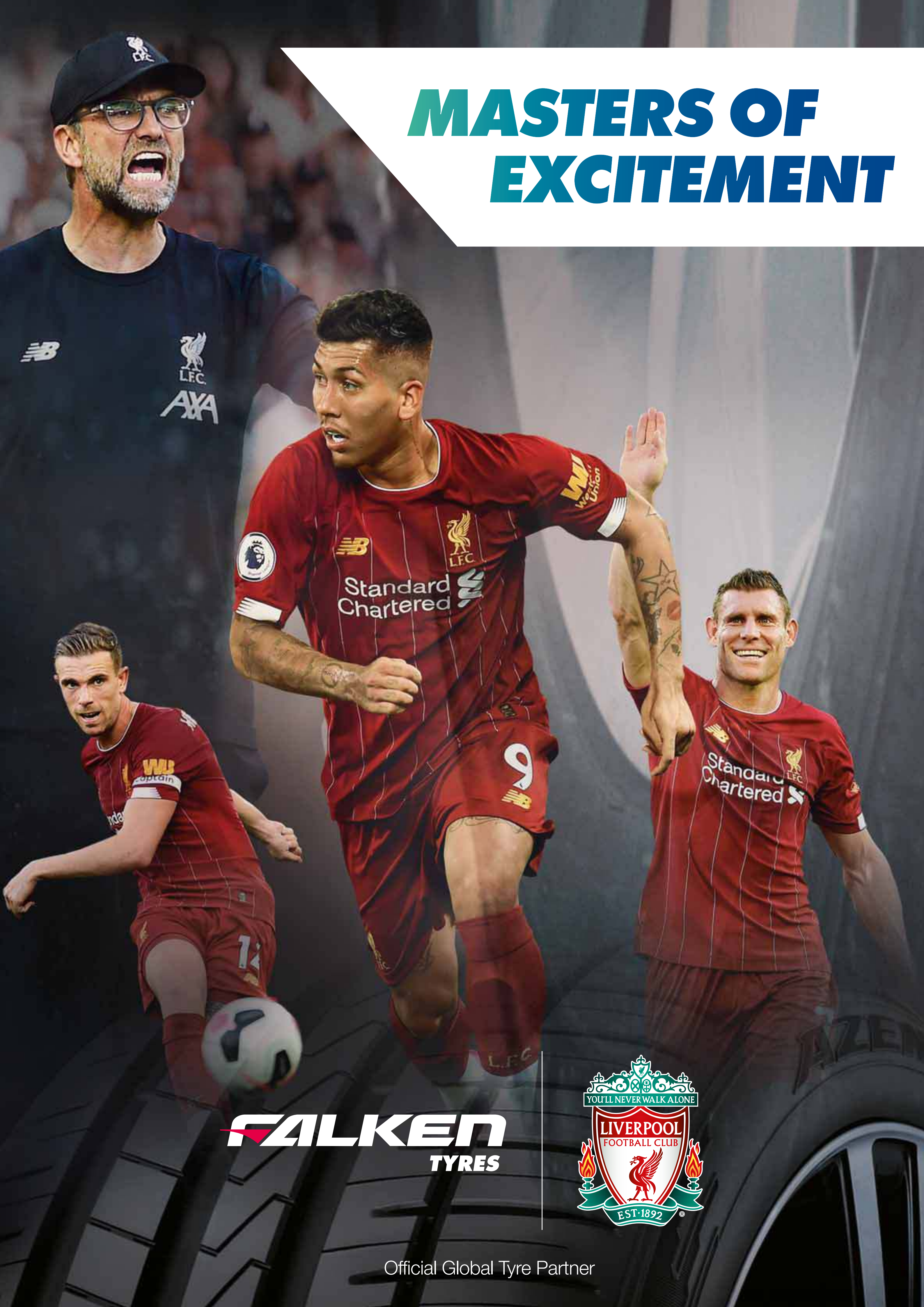
The Right To Play logo debuted on Liverpool's Champions League shirts for the opening home group game against FC Salzburg. The club's partnership with Right To Play creates and implements high-impact programmes that benefit children both in Liverpool and overseas.

LFC Foundation Open Goals lead-coach, Rob Fairfield, said: "The Jones family have been attending our programme for over 12 months. They all get involved with the session and although both Isaac and Evie were quiet and shy when they first started coming, over time they have developed confidence individually and working as a team.

"They have shown great commitment to the programme and I have also received feedback from their school on their growth in confidence and leadership skills. I am delighted they received this treat – it's well-deserved."

Matt Parish, director of LFC Foundation, added: "Having the opportunity to feature the Right To Play logo on the European shirts is fantastic and provides a global platform to highlight our work with Right To Play to fans worldwide.

"The partnership enables us to extend our reach and help transform the lives of many more children through the power of play – both here in Liverpool and overseas."


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is the official 2018/19 UEFA Champions League Winners book. Written and produced by Reach Sport, the team behind your Liverpool FC Magazine, the 320-page book captures every aspect of the Reds' amazing success.

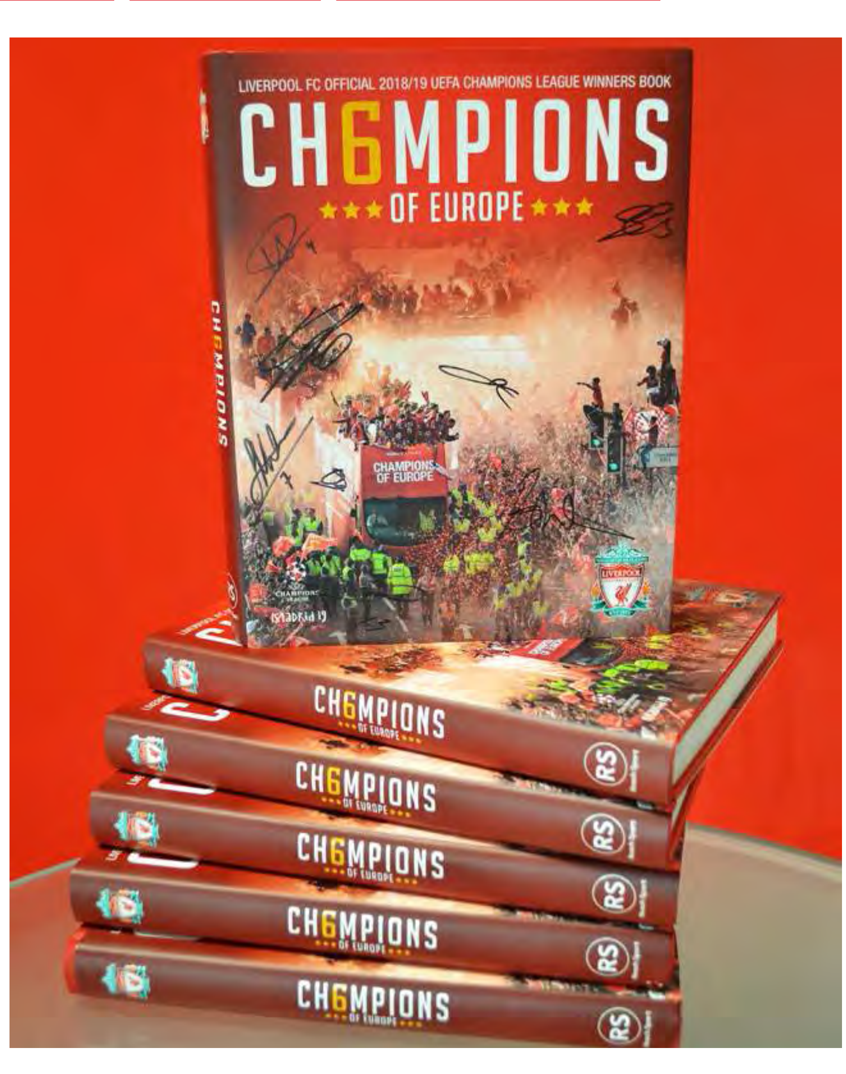
We went to PSG and Napoli, Belgrade and Germany. When we went the Allianz Liverpool scored three. Porto, Barcelona... You can read all about those games, home and away, plus all the colour and action from the 2-0 win against Spurs in Madrid and the homecoming scenes.

Cracking Christmas present, anyone? And, because we're in the spirit, we've got a copy signed by members of LFC's Champions League-winning squad to give away to one lucky reader. *Simply tell us:*

Which club play home games at Estadio Metropolitano, the venue of Liverpool's UCL final victory?

Email your answer, name, address and contact phone number with 'Six Times Competition' in the subject line to liverpoolfcmag@reachsport.com before 18 December 2019. Normal Reach PLC competition rules apply.

CH6MPIONS OF EUROPE is available from official club stores and store.liverpoolfc.com.



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What's On

DEC/JAN





ANOTHER DAY, ANOTHER CUP

The Reds have had busy Decembers before, but the forthcoming fixture-list will see them play eleven games in five different competitions in the 36 days between 7 December 2019 and 11 January 2020.

The schedule includes a cup quarter-final and a semi-final in less than 24 hours as they follow the Carabao Cup tie at Aston Villa (when the team will be managed by Under-23s coach Neil Critchley) with their World Club Cup appearance in Doha.

Before that, there is the small matter of sealing qualification to the knockout stages of the Champions League when they make the trip to Austria to take on FC Salzburg on Matchday Six.

The 36-day spell begins at Bournemouth and ends with a first visit to the new Tottenham Hotspur Stadium and includes another four Premier League games in-between, including Anfield dates with Watford (also LFC Foundation Day), Wolves and Sheffield United, as well as a Boxing Day trip to high-flying Leicester City.

There is also the third round of the FA Cup to fit in, with Liverpool hosting Everton in a repeat of the third-round tie from January 2018, pictured.

DEC/JAN

What's On

LFC WOMEN AIM FOR WIN TREBLE

Liverpool FC Women sign off for 2019 with three games in a week at Prenton Park. The Reds play Barclays FA Women's Super League fixtures against London duo West Ham United (8 December) and Chelsea (15 December) with both games kicking off at 2pm.

They also have a Continental Tyres Cup clash against Durham Women in between on Wednesday 11 December (6.30pm). After their record-breaking appearance at Anfield last month, why not get along to Tranmere and back the girls?

"All three games are going to be tough but we'll certainly be going all out to end the year on a high and it would be great to see as many of our brilliant fans as possible at the games," says captain Sophie Bradley-Auckland.



ALL THOSE YEARS AGO...

19 years since Igor Biscan made his debut in a 1-0 defeat to Ipswich on 10 December 2000

39 years since Ian Rush made his debut in a 1-1 draw at Ipswich on 13 December 1980

65 years since LFC's record league defeat, 1-9 at Birmingham City, on 11 December 1954

64 years since Jimmy Melia made a scoring LFC debut v Nottingham Forest on 17 December 1955

53 years since Johan Cruyff scored twice at Anfield for Ajax in the second leg of a European Cup second-round tie on 14 December 1966

60 years since Liverpool's first game under Bill Shankly on 19 December 1959

94 years since striker Gordon Hodgson signed for Liverpool on 14 December 1925

And it's 40 years since Liverpool beat Manchester United 2-0 on Boxing Day 1979...

It was still the days of two points for a win and the Boxing Day clash between the two North West rivals promised to be a real Christmas cracker.

The teams were tied at the top of the First Division table with 30 points although Dave Sexton's Manchester United had played a game more than Bob Paisley's Reds.

Alan Hansen proved to be the man for the occasion, crowning an immaculate performance with the opening goal as the Reds recorded a 2-0 win to the delight of most inside Anfield. The Scottish centre-back had recently been overlooked by his national team but showed them what they were missing.

The *Daily Record* reported of his 15th minute strike: "Hansen's goal was a lesson in sheer class. The move started from deep in Liverpool's half and was developed with a forward pass by Graeme Souness to Hansen, who took it in his stride and accelerated powerfully.

"As he reached the 18-yard line he released the ball shrewdly to Ray Kennedy, who played it back and Hansen finished it by scoring in a style that brought back memories of vintage [Franz] Beckenbauer."

There was a gulf in class between the sides despite their proximity in the league table, but Liverpool only made sure of the points five minutes form time when United goalkeeper Gary Bailey failed to keep out David Johnson's powerful shot after he had been picked out by a cross from England team-mate Phil Neal.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Terry McDermott
68 on 8 December

Steve Nicol
58 on 11 December

Stig Inge Bjornebye
50 on 11 December

Stephen Warnock
38 on 12 December

Daniel Agger
35 on 12 December

Michael Owen
40 on 14 December

Martin Skrtel
35 on 15 December

Ryan Babel
33 on 19 December

Sepp van den Berg
18 on 20 December

Gary McAllister
55 on Christmas Day

Leighanne Robe
26 on Boxing Day

**Peter Krawietz
48 on 31 December**



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2019/20 Fixtures & Results

AUGUST		SCORE/KO	TV	SCORERS
Sun 04	Manchester City (CS, N)	1-1*	BT	Matip (pens: Shaqiri, Lallana, Chamberlain, Salah)
Fri 09	Norwich City (H)	4-1	Sky	Hanley (OG), Salah, Van Dijk, Origi
Wed 14	Chelsea (Super Cup, N)	2-2**	BT	Mane 2 (pens: Firmino, Fabinho, Origi, A-Arnold, Salah)
Sat 17	Southampton (A)	2-1		Mane, Firmino
Sat 24	Arsenal (H)	3-1	Sky	Matip, Salah 2 (1 pen)
Sat 31	Burnley (A)	3-0	Sky	Wood (OG), Mane, Firmino
SEPTEMBER				
Sat 14	Newcastle United (H)	3-1	BT	Mane 2, Salah
Tue 17	Napoli (UCL Matchday 1, A)	0-2	BT	
Sun 22	Chelsea (A)	2-1	Sky	Alexander-Arnold, Firmino
Wed 25	MK Dons (Carabao Cup 3, A)	2-0	Sky	Milner, Hoever
Sat 28	Sheffield United (A)	1-0	BT	Wijnaldum
OCTOBER				
Wed 02	Salzburg (UCL Matchday 2, H)	4-3	BT	Mane, Robertson, Salah 2
Sat 05	Leicester City (H)	2-1		Mane, Milner (pen)
Sun 20	Manchester United (A)	1-1	Sky	Lallana
Wed 23	Genk (UCL Matchday 3, A)	4-1	BT	Oxlade-Chamberlain 2, Mane, Salah
Sun 27	Tottenham Hotspur (H)	2-1	Sky	Henderson, Salah (pen)
Wed 30	Arsenal (Carabao Cup 4, H)	5-5**	Sky	Mustafi (OG), Milner (pen), Oxlade-Chamberlain, Origi 2 (pens: Milner, Lallana, Brewster, Origi, Jones)
NOVEMBER				
Sat 02	Aston Villa (A)	2-1		Robertson, Mane
Tue 05	Genk (UCL Matchday 4, H)	2-1	BT	Wijnaldum, Oxlade-Chamberlain
Sun 10	Manchester City (H)	3-1	Sky	Fabinho, Salah, Mane
Sat 23	Crystal Palace (A)	2-1		Mane, Firmino
Wed 27	Napoli (UCL Matchday 5, H)	1-1	BT	Lovren
Sat 30	Brighton (H)	2-1		Van Dijk 2
DECEMBER				
Wed 04	Everton (H)	5-2	AP	Origi 2, Shaqiri, Mane, Wijnaldum
Sat 07	Bournemouth (A)	3pm		
Tue 10	Salzburg (UCL Matchday 6, A)	5.55pm	BT	
Sat 14	Watford (H)	12.30pm	BT	
Tue 17	Aston Villa (Carabao Cup QF, A)	7.45pm	Sky	
Wed 18	Club World Championship SF	5.30pm	BBC	
Sat 21	Club World Championship F/3rd	TBC	BBC	
Thu 26	Leicester City (A)	8pm	AP	
Sun 29	Wolverhampton W (H)	4.30pm	Sky	
JANUARY				
Thu 02	Sheffield United (H)	8pm	BT	
Sat 04	Everton (FA Cup 3, H)	TBC		
Wed 08	Carabao Cup SF 1	TBC		
Sat 11	Tottenham Hotspur (A)	5.30pm	Sky	
Sun 19	Manchester United (H)	4.30pm	Sky	
Thu 23	Wolverhampton W (A)	8pm	BT	
Sat 25	FA Cup 4	TBC		
Wed 29	Carabao Cup SF 2	TBC		
FEBRUARY				
Sat 01	Southampton (H)	3pm		
Sat 08/15	Norwich City (A)	TBC		
T/W 18/19	UCL last 16 1	TBC	BT	
Sat 22	West Ham United (H)	3pm		
T/W 25/26	UCL last 16 1	TBC	BT	
Sat 29	Watford (A)	3pm		
MARCH				
Sun 01	Carabao Cup final (N)	TBC		
Wed 04	FA Cup 5	TBC		
Sat 07	Bournemouth (H)	3pm		
T/W 10/11	UCL last 16 2	TBC	BT	
Sat 14	Everton (A)	3pm		
T/W 17/18	UCL last 16 2	TBC	BT	
Sat 21	Crystal Palace (H)	3pm		
Sat 21	FA Cup 6	TBC		
APRIL				
Sat 04	Manchester City (A)	3pm		
T/W 07/08	UCL QF 1	TBC	BT	
Sat 11	Aston Villa (H)	3pm		
T/W 14/15	UCL QF 2	TBC	BT	
Sat 18	Brighton (A)	3pm		
Sat 18	FA Cup SF	TBC		
Sat 25	Burnley (H)	3pm		
T/W 28/29	UCL SF 1	TBC	BT	
MAY				
Sat 02	Arsenal (A)	3pm		
T/W 05/06	UCL SF 2	TBC	BT	
Sat 09	Chelsea (H)	3pm		
Sun 17	Newcastle United (A)	3pm		
Sat 23	FA Cup final (N)	TBC		
Sat 30	UCL final (N)	TBC	BT	
TBC	West Ham United (A)	TBC		





All fixtures subject to change. AP = Amazon Prime *lost 5-4 on pens ** won 5-4 on pens



NEIL MELLOR

If a young team is fielded in the Carabao Cup, how they react will shape their development and careers

Liverpool's Carabao Cup and FIFA Club World Cup fixture clash is due to the different footballing organisations not being interested in each other's competitions.

The Premier League, FA, Football League, FIFA and UEFA all want their competition to be taken the most seriously. But, because Liverpool have been doing so well, it has created a fixture pile-up that means the Reds play twice in two days on different continents.

It's not a new issue. Manchester United withdrew from the FA Cup in 2000 to play in FIFA's competition, but I'm pleased that Liverpool didn't concede their place in the Carabao Cup quarter-final. Now Jürgen Klopp has to manage his squads accordingly.

The League Cup has been quashed in other countries. France is the only other 'big five' league to still have a League Cup and they're ditching it after this season. We all know it ranks lower down the priority list, but it is a competition Liverpool have enjoyed good times in and I wouldn't want to see it scrapped. It's certainly good for young players' development.

Young players develop better around senior players and I remember going to Tottenham as part of a very young Liverpool squad for the League Cup quarter-final in 2004/05. The likes of myself, Darren Potter, Zak Whitbread, David Raven, John Welsh, Richie Partridge and Mark Smyth played alongside a few senior players, such as Jerzy Dudek and Stephane Henchoz.

Tottenham had Paul Robinson, Ledley King, Michael Carrick, Robbie Keane and Jermain Defoe playing, but we beat them on penalties at White Hart Lane. It was a really proud night for the Academy and I think it will take something similar – something quite incredible – for Liverpool to beat Aston Villa this year.

If a young team is fielded they have to approach it as a learning experience – as good or bad as the result turns out – because how they react will shape their development. For some it could be the biggest game they play in their careers. For others it could be the making of them.

The rest of Klopp's squad will be in Qatar for the FIFA Club World Cup semi-final a day later. I have to be honest and say, personally, it's not a competition I'm getting that excited about.

I love English football. I'm not a fan of South American football, North American football, football in Africa or Asia. I only watch English football and the Champions League as that's how I was brought up.

In 2005 I was a Liverpool player when the club played in the FIFA Club World Cup and it didn't feel like a big deal at all. Our FA Cup game at Luton that felt like a bigger deal, but the world has changed.

The Liverpool squad has a lot more continental players from South America and Africa. Winning the FIFA Club World Cup would, perhaps, enhance their reputations more than winning the Carabao Cup. So I'm sure the players will go there with the Liverpool mentality of wanting to win every competition they play in, but if the Reds hadn't qualified I wouldn't be watching.

I also feel the timing of it is unhelpful for Liverpool – a distraction from the Premier League at a time when we're flying. Our first league game after Qatar is Leicester City away and, given the position they find themselves in, you have to say they are genuine title contenders.

They were written off the year they won it and Brendan Rodgers has done a very good job there, but I still think top-four would be incredible for them. Plus a lot can happen between now and Boxing Day. Form, injuries and speculation ahead of the January transfer-window could prove unsettling.

For Liverpool it's all about recovering from Qatar and deciding who is in the best shape to go to Leicester and get, potentially, a very big result.

Hopefully it will be a Merry Christmas for us all.



• Follow Neil on Twitter @NeilMellor33

























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